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T65 Dramatic works

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COUNT TOLSTOÏ IN 1887.

From the painting by Ryepin.

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The
DRAMATIC WORKS
of
See LYOF N. TOLSTOÏ *198*

TRANSLATED BY
NATHAN HASKELL DOLE

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COMPLETE EDITION

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INTRODUCTION

In one of his educational articles Count Tolstoï speaks of a hitherto unrealized plan of writing a story or a play on some proverb, such as is to be found in Snegiref's Collection. He afterward carried out the idea in the play entitled "Vlast Tmui," the Power (or Dominion) of Darkness (or Evil), which has a proverb for its secondary title. This drama, written wholly in the crabbed staccato speech of the Tula peasant, has, nevertheless, an enormous tragic impulse, which places it on a level with the ancient Greek tragedies. There are certain scenes also, as that, for instance, where the reformed drunkard—the laborer, Mitritch—and the little girl, Anyutka, are talking, while the father and grandmother of the illegitimate baby are murdering it, which in their weird and gruesome suggestiveness remind one of the work of Maeterlinck or Ibsen. If this play could be translated into the Cornish or Dorset dialect, or even into the dialect of New England, it would gain immensely. But even then, while there would be increased and perhaps adequate quaintness, the conciseness of the peasant speech could not be given, and Akim's halting utterance, with its amusing repetition of *tayo* and *znatchit*, would fare but ill. Yet it is Akim, the God-fearing, simple-minded peasant, whom Tolstoï makes the moral figure of the play, and his principles triumph in the end.

In the comedy "The Fruits of Enlightenment," Count Tolstoï holds up to ridicule the empirical weaknesses of medicine and such fads as hypnotism, spiritualism, and the like. As usual he contrasts the absurdities of a narrow and superficial culture with the sterling sense and unaffected reason of the man of the people living near to nature, and not worried over microbes and bacilli. The humor of the play is legitimate and characteristic; one can easily believe that it was effective when presented on the stage.

The present volume contains, in addition to the two dramas, "The Power of Darkness" and "The Fruits of Enlightenment" (or "Culture"), published in the lifetime of Count Tolstoï, two other complete Plays—"The Live Corpse" (known also as "The Man Who Was Dead" and presented with success on the Stage under the title of "Redemption")¹ and "The Root of all Evil" ("The Cause of it All") and two unfinished pieces, "The Light Shines in the Darkness" and "The First Distiller," as well as a series of twenty-one sketches, for the most part in the form of dialogues, under the collective head—"The Wisdom of Children." All these, with the exception of "The First Distiller," were published in the three volumes of Count Tolstoï's "Posthumous Works," edited by his daughter the Countess Alexandra Lvovna and his friend Chertkóf. Like everything else proceeding from the great Writer's pen these were sadly mutilated by the Censor; but after the Revolution this incubus was put to flight and they are now given to the public in their original form as found in the author's manuscripts. From the revised edition the present translation has been made.

The Russian editors complained that only about one-third of the "The Light that Shines in the Darkness" was permitted publication!

This Drama which is Count Tolstoï's own soul-tragedy is only a torso. The final Act exists only in synopsis, but the synopsis is sufficient to show the powerful climax to which the scenes would have led. What he did finish is a poignant presentation of the difficulties in which a too literal construction of isolated texts from the Gospels must involve a man. Who can really believe that the world would be any better if all were reduced to a flat level of poverty and renunciation of all that makes life beautiful? That in isolated instances, some one person, like Tolstoï, might find a spiritual joy in stripping himself of all possessions is possible; but such a person cannot rightfully involve wife and children in

¹ It seems a pity that the title of Tolstoï's posthumous novel "Resurrection" and of this Drama could not have been exchanged. "Resurrection" would have suited the play perfectly, and "Redemption" the novel.

such acts of abnegation without causing more suffering than would balance his own inner satisfaction. Here unselfishness circles round to the cruelest kind of selfishness.

How distinctly Count Tolstoï recognized these difficulties is shown in the reactions developed by the wife and children of Nikolaï Ivánovitch Saruintsof and by his fanatic young disciple, Prince Borís. Like Socialism, Philosophic Anarchy may be perfect in theory but, with human nature as it is and always has been, it will not work out well in practice. Not for long did the early Christians find it possible to have all things in common. The end of the world did not come in that generation, as was so confidently predicted.

Still there may be a Middle Path and many rich men—not so many either!—have found their greatest happiness in what they gave away and not in what they inherited or made for themselves. Christ, who bade the rich young man to divest himself of all he had and follow him, also said “The laborer is worthy of his hire” and made no mention of “a living wage”; nor did he show any hot indignation against the man that bought the field where a great treasure was concealed or give any lecture on tax-paying when he said “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s.” It is not well to interpret Oriental Wisdom too literally!

In this unfortunately incomplete Drama, as in everything written by Count Tolstoï, life is presented as life without exaggeration; or if with exaggeration only that which has the verisimilitude of life, for life is full and men are full of exaggerations. It is a pitiless picture of his own mental and moral make-up; of his own struggles, of his own futile search for Happiness, and those who oppose him in his ambitionless ambition are not made ridiculous: he seemed to enter into their mode of thought and understand it, so that he presents it with remarkable fairness. It throws a vivid light on Tolstoï’s last years and on his lonely and pathetic death in the sordid railway-station at Astápovo.

To one brought up in the cold blue atmosphere of New England Puritanism, where a lie was perhaps the greatest

of sins, the picture of Nikolai Ivánovitch dying with a falsehood on his lips, after his desperate search for the Truth, is to say the least somewhat startling: yet how dramatic it is (though only hinted and not actually staged), how true to Truth, what a superb lie it is—how characteristic of the honorable and high-minded man that he is seen to be, much as we may detest his theology! A lie in expiation of the involuntary wrong that the overwrought Princess, Mother of Borís, charges him with having accomplished to her hurt.

Zhivói Trup—a title unpleasant if rendered literally and yet extraordinarily apt—A Live Corpse—is based on a quite different kind of lie and yet one lived as well as told with an equally romantic and altruistic intent. Just as you and all who know him can not help loving the fanatical Nikolai Ivánovitch and sympathizing with him so you and every one else, even the Romany Folk, are drawn to the dissipated Fedya Protásóf with his drunkenness (which he detests) and his fine ideals which he can not attain except at the expense of his life. Tolstoi's skill as a Dramatist is admirably shown in the inevitable way in which the plot leads to its dénouement. It grew out of an incident in real life; it is indeed not a very uncommon thing for men or women faced with such a domestic impasse either to make way with themselves or to disappear in such a manner as to lead to the supposition that they have made way with themselves. Tennyson's Poem, "Enoch Arden"—also based on fact—is a case in point. It would have been made dramatic or far more dramatic had Enoch's wife discovered that her first husband was living and that she was an involuntary bigamist and had Enoch then committed suicide. But in "Enoch Arden" there is no such soul-problem as beset Protásóf. It is far more primitive. Tolstoi in this play of his as in "Anna Karénina" is obsessed with his New Testament doctrine of divorce and the absurd and barbarous law that obtained in Russia at the time the Play was written—allowing severance of marital ties only on ocular proof of adultery—played into his hands in making Protásóf's conduct consistent with his inward deli-

cacy of feeling. With its large contrast of scene-variety it is admirably adapted for stage-representation.

Tolstoi's consummate knowledge and understanding of the Russian muzhík—and of his wife—and his uncompromising attitude toward the use of alcoholic liquors are demonstrated in the quite extraordinarily affecting little drama, the title of which is taken from a phrase used by the Tramp whose better nature is brought out by kind treatment instead of by punishment. Even the rough drunken *krestyanin*, Mikhaïla, who beats his wife on the slightest provocation—if he did not, she would, from tradition, suspect that he didn't love her—even he is softened by sudden impulse to let the thief go, perhaps dimly recognizing that the man was not so much to blame as he was himself for having tempted the poor fellow to take too much vodka.

All these plays have a moral purport and they inculcate Tolstoi's own theories of life. So also do the quaint little Dialogs which go to prove the depth of wisdom indicated in the Psalm which says, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou established strength."

One can not help regretting that Tolstoi did not sooner conceive the idea of using the dramatic form for his literary work. It is well known that he was greatly attracted to it and that what kept him from ampler exploitation of the Stage was the dread of the Censorship. There can be little doubt that if he had not been hampered by that outrageous form of repression and had been free to use all his powers in it, he would have been the greatest Dramatist not merely of Russia but of the modern world. His contributions to that Art, as here presented, are, as it is, of the highest importance.

NATHAN HASKELL DOLE.

Boston:

February, 1923.

xii NOTE ON RUSSIAN WORDS

Dunya, Dunyasha, Dunyashka, dim. of Avdotya (Eudoxia).

Fedya, Fedka, Fédenka, dim. of Fyodor, Feodor (Theodore).

Gavrila, col. for Gavriil (Gabriel).

Gerasim (Gerizim).

Grisha, Grishka, dim. of Grígori (Gregory).

Grunya, Grusha, Grushka, dim. of Agrafina (Agrippina).

Ilyusha, Ilyushka, dim. of Ilyá (Elias).

Iván, common form of *Ioánn* (John).

Kátya, Kátenka, dim. of *Yekaterina* (Catherine, Katharine), Fr. Catiche.

Kolya, Kólenka, Nikolashka, dim. of Nikolai (Nicholas, Nicolas).

Liza, Lizanka, dim. of Yelizavyeta (Elizabeth).

Lukeriya, col. for *Glikeriya* (Glycera).

Lyúba, dim. of *Lyubóv* (Love, Charity, Amy).

Makarka, dim. of *Makár* (Macarius).

Marfutka, dim. of *Marfa* (Martha).

Márinka, Marinushka, dim. of *Marina*.

Masha, Máshenka, Mashurka, Mashka, dim. of *Mariya*, *Márya* (Maria, Mary).

Mikola, colloquial for *Nikolai* (Nicholas).

Mishetchka, Misha, Mishenka, dim. of *Mikhaíl, Mikhaíla* (Michael).

Mitka, Mitenka, dim. of *Dmitri, Dimitri* (Demetrius).

Mikita, dim. *Mikishka*, col. for *Nikita* (Nicetas).

Palashka, Pasha, dim. of *Pelagiya, Palageya* (Pelagia).

Nadya, Nádenka, dim. of *Nadyezhda* (Hope).

Nastya, Nástenka, dim. of *Anastasya, Anastasya* (Anastasia).

Natasha, dim. of *Nataliya, Natálya* (Natalie).

Osip, col. for *Iósif* (Joseph).

Pavlusha, Pavlushka, Pavelyónok, dim. of *Pavel* (Paul).

Petya, Pétenka, Petrusha, Petrushka, dim. of *Piotr* or *Pyotr* (Peter).

Polina, col. for *Pavla, Pavlina* (Paulina, Pauline).

Sasha, Sáshenka, dim. of *Aleksandr* (Alexander).

Semka, Sioma, dims. of *Semyón* (Simon).

Seryozha, dim. for *Sergyei* (Sergius, Serge).

NOTE ON RUSSIAN WORDS xiii

Stepa, Styépa, Styopa, Stenka, dim. of *Stepán* (Stephen, Steven).

Senetchka, dim. of *Arseny* (Arsenius).

Sonya, Sónenka, Sónyetchka, Sónyushka, dim. of *Sofiya, Sófyá* (Sophia).

Tánishka, Tányushka, dim. of *Tatyana, Tatiana*.

Tishka, Tishenka, dim. of *Tikhon*.

Vanya, Vanka, Vánushka, dim. of *Iván, Ioann* (John, Jack).

Varya, Várenka, dim. of *Varvára* (Barbara).

Vasya, Vásenka, dim. of *Vasíli* (Basil).

Volodya, Volódenka, dim. of *Vladímir* (Woldemar).

Vyérotchka, dim. of *Vyera, Viera, Vera* (Faith).

Yegór, Yury (dim. *Yegorushka*), col. for *Georgy* (George).

COMMON RUSSIAN WORDS USED IN TEXT

Akh, exclamation, ah.

Allegri, a ball or masquerade sometimes connected with a lottery.

Baba, a woman, especially the wife of a *muzhík* or peasant.

Bábushka, grandmother: address to an old woman.

Balalaïka, a kind of primitive guitar with long neck, generally triangular body and carrying two or three strings.

Barchúk, barchinok, popular dim. of *baritch*, the son of a *barin*, or nobleman or landed gentleman.

Barin, a gentleman or nobleman; address suitable for any man from an inferior.

Báruinya, title or address applied to the wife of a landed proprietor.

Báruishnya, an unmarried lady, Mademoiselle, Miss.

Bátyushka, a term of endearment for an old man or a priest (*pop*); dim. of *otyéts*, father; variants are *batya, bátenka*.

Bonjourka, a man's jacket or coat (Fr. *Bon jour*).

Chávalui, term of address to the Gypsies.

Chetvert, (dry measure) 5.77 bushels.

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Verst, measure of distance, 3500 feet (0.66 mile), 1077 meters.

Vetcherók, dim. of *vetcher*, an evening party.

Vino, wine, is often used to signify a stronger liquor; vodka.

Vish, *vish tui*, exclamation, "just look!"

Vodka, brandy or other strong distilled drink.

Volost, a district containing several villages or mirs.

Yágodka, little berry, dim. of *yágoda*.

Zemsky, adjective from *Zemstvo*, used as a noun, an officer of the Zemstvo or Rural Court.

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CHARACTERS

PIOTR: A rich muzhik of forty-two, twice married, sickly.

ANISYA: His wife, thirty-two, fond of finery.

AKULINA: Piotr's daughter by his first marriage, sixteen, hard of hearing, half-witted.

ANYUTKA: His second daughter, ten years old.

NIKITA (Colloquial, MIKITA, MIKIT): A laborer in their employ, twenty-five years of age, rather gay.

AKIM: Nikita's father, an ill-favored but God-fearing muzhik of fifty.

MARFA: Piotr's sister.

MATRIONA: Akim's wife, fifty years of age.

MARINA: An orphan girl of twenty-two.

A WOMAN FRIEND (KUMA).

MITRITCH: An old laborer, formerly a soldier.

ANISYA'S GODMOTHER.

MATCHMAKER: A morose muzhik.

MARINA'S HUSBAND.

FIRST GIRL.

SECOND GIRL.

URYADNIK.

IZVOSHCHIK.

WEDDING MARSHAL.

AKULINA'S HUSBAND.

STAROSTA.

Populace, guests, women, girls, people at the wedding.

THE POWER OF DARKNESS

OR,

“IF ONE CLAW IS CAUGHT THE WHOLE BIRD
IS LOST”

(1886)

ACT I

A large village in autumn. The scene represents PIOTR's ample izba. PIOTR is sitting on the bench mending a horse-collar. ANISYA and AKULINA are spinning.

SCENE I

PIOTR, ANISYA, and AKULINA (*the two women singing a duet*).

PIOTR (*looking out of the window*). The horses are out again. Look there! they'll kill the colt. Nikita, oh, Nikita. He's deaf! (*He listens: then, addressing the women*) Hush! I can't hear anything.

(*NIKITA's voice is heard from the side of the house next the yard.*)

NIKITA. What is it?

PIOTR. Drive in the horses.

NIKITA (*unseen*). I'll drive them in when I have time.

PIOTR (*shaking his head*). Oh, these laborers! If I were only well, I would never keep them another day. They are a trial. . . . (*He gets up and sits down again.*) Nikita! . . . He does not heed me. I say, one of you go! Akul, you go and drive them in.

AKULINA. What, the horses?

PIOTR. What else do you suppose?

AKULINA. I'll go. (*She goes out.*)

SCENE II

PIOTR and ANISYA

PIOTR. Oh, he's a lazy fellow . . . no good at all. He gets out of everything.

ANISYA. You yourself are mighty lively! . . . From the stove to the bench, and then you expect other folks to work.

PIOTR. I don't get much out of you, for you aren't at home more than once a year. Oh, what people!

ANISYA. You give out ten jobs at once and then scold. It's easy to lie on the oven and give orders.

PIOTR (*sighing*). If this sickness had not got hold of me, I would not keep him a day!

(AKULINA'S voice behind the scene, *Pse! pse! pse! The colt is heard neighing, and the horses gallop through the gates; the gates creak.*)

PIOTR. Talk small talk . . . that's all he can do. It's a fact! he isn't worth keeping.

ANISYA (*imitating him*). No, he's not worth keeping. If you ever stirred yourself, you might talk.

SCENE III

The Same, and AKULINA

AKULINA (*entering*). I got them driven in; it was hard work. Always that roan.

PIOTR. Where is Nikita?

AKULINA. Oh, Nikita? He's standing in the street.

PIOTR. What's he standing there for?

AKULINA. What's he standing there for? He's standing on the corner, chatting.

PIOTR. Can't get anything out of her! Well, who's he chatting with?

AKULINA (*not hearing him*). What?

(PIOTR *shakes his fist at AKULINA; she sits down at her spinning.*)

SCENE IV

The Same, and ANYUTKA

ANYUTKA (*running in: to her mother*). Nikita's father and mother have come for him. They are going to take him home and give him a wife,—let him rest awhile.

ANISYA. What are you lying for?

ANYUTKA. Fact! May I die on the spot! (*Laughing.*) I just went by. And Nikita said: "Now good-by, Anna Petrovna.¹ Come and dance at my wedding. I'm going to leave you," says he, and he laughed.

ANISYA (*to her husband*). Don't seem to need *you* over much. He's going away of his own accord. "I'll drive 'em in," says he.

PIOTR. Well, let him go; can't I find some one else?

ANISYA. How about the money you advanced him?

(ANYUTKA goes to the door and listens to what is said, and goes out.)

SCENE V

ANISYA, PIOTR, and AKULINA

PIOTR (*frowning*). He can work out the money next summer, easily enough.

ANISYA. Yes, you're glad to let him go so as to save his share of the bread. Yes, and all winter I shall have to work like a horse. Your girl doesn't seem to like working very well, and you'll be lying on the stove. I know you!

PIOTR. What makes you wag your tongue to no good, without sense?

ANISYA. The yard is full of cattle. You didn't sell the cow and you've kept all the sheep for the winter—

¹ Anyutka is the diminutive of Anna; Petrovna signifies daughter of Piotr.

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and who's going to feed 'em and water 'em? and yet you want to let the hand go! I'm not going to do a man's work for you. I'll follow your example and lie on the stove all the time; let everything go to the dogs, if you want to. Do just as you please.

PIOTR (*to AKULINA*). Go and get the feed, will you—it's time.

AKULINA. Get the feed? Well, I will. (*She puts on a kaftan and takes a rope.*)

ANISYA. I'm not going to work for you. I've done all I'm going to. Do your own work.

PIOTR. Now stop. What are you fussing about? You're just like a contrary sheep.

ANISYA. You're a mad dog yourself. There's no work to be got out of you, or any pleasure living with you. You just live to eat. You're a palsied dog, you are!

PIOTR (*spitting, and putting on his coat*). Lord save us! I'll go and find out what's doing. (*Goes out.*)

ANISYA (*following him up*). You rotten devil! ugly nose!

SCENE VI

ANISYA and AKULINA

AKULINA. What are you scolding dad for?

ANISYA. Now you shut up, you fool!

AKULINA (*going to the door*). I know why you're scolding him. You are a fool, a bitch. I'm not afraid of you.

ANISYA. What's that you say? (*leaping to her feet and searching for something to thrash her with*). Look out! I'll thrash you.

AKULINA (*opening the door*). You're a dog, you're a devil, that's what you are. You devil, dog, dog, devil! (*Runs out.*)

SCENE VII

ANISYA (*alone*)

ANISYA (*pensively soliloquizing*). He said, "Come to the wedding!" did he? What idea have they in mind,

I should like to know. Marry? Look here, Nikita, if this is your doings, then I'll show my hand. . . . I can't live without him! I'll not let him go.

SCENE VIII

ANISYA and NIKITA

NIKITA (*entering and glancing around. Seeing that ANISYA is alone, he quickly approaches her; in a whisper*). Just think, darling!² what a shame! My father has come and wants to take me back. He commands me to go home. He says, "We're going to marry you, and you'll have to live at home, and that's the end of it."

ANISYA. All right! get married! What difference does it make to me?

NIKITA. What do you say? I was counting on talking the matter over with her, and here she says, "Get married." What does she mean? (*Winking.*) Have you forgotten?

ANISYA. Yes, marry! What's the difference. . . .

NIKITA. What makes you so pert? Would you mind; she won't even let me caress her! What is the matter with you?

ANISYA. So you mean to throw me over, do you? Well, if you want to throw me over, all right, I don't need you. Here's the truth for you.

NIKITA. Now, that'll do, Anisya! Would I forget you? Never in the world. As a matter of course, I will never throw you over. But this is the way I look upon it: I may get married, but I will come back to you all the same if only they don't keep me at home.

ANISYA. Very useful you'd be to me after you were married!

NIKITA. But what can I do, darling? I could never go against my father's will, anyway.

ANISYA. You blame it on your father; but it's your own scheme. For a long time you've been spooning with that mistress of yours, Marinka. She put you up to

²He calls her *bratyets tui moi*; literally, little brother mine.

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this. Not for nothing was she gadding about here the other day.

NIKITA. Marinka! Much I care for her! . . . Plenty of them are hanging around! . . .

ANISYA. But why has your father come? You told him to! You have been deceiving me! (*She weeps.*)

NIKITA. Anisya, do you believe in God or not? I did not even dream of such a thing! I know nothing about it, indeed I don't,³ and that's the end of it. My old man concocted the whole thing out of his head.

ANISYA. But if you don't want to, they can't make you, can they, as if you were a jackass?

NIKITA. Well, I reckon one can't go against one's father's will: I should not like to!

ANISYA. Simply say you won't, and stick to it!

NIKITA. One fellow did refuse, and he got such a thrashing by the district judge.⁴ It is very simple, but I don't like it. They say it tickles. . . .

ANISYA. Stop joking! Listen to me, Nikita: if you take Marinka as your wife, I don't know what I'll do to myself! I'll kill myself. I have sinned, I have broken the Commandment, and now there's no turning back. If you go away now, I'll do something desperate.

NIKITA. Why should I go away? If I had wanted to go, I should have gone long ago. Some time since, Ivan Semyonuitch wanted me as his coachman, worst kind. And what a life it would have been! I did not go! That shows, I reckon, that every one likes me. If you did not love me, it would be a different matter.

ANISYA. Just remember this! The old man will be dying one of these days—and soon, too, I think; then we can make all our sins good. I shall have the right, then, you shall be master. . . .

NIKITA. Why make plans? What difference is it to me? I work as much as I please. My master likes me, and his wife, of course, likes me too. And it is

³ *Znat' nye znayo, vyedat' nye vyedayo*, quadruply emphatic.

⁴ The judges elected by the commune, or *mir*, have control of the so-called *Volostnoye pravleniye*, which is an institution of the *Volost*, dealing with the collection of taxes and even with family affairs.

certainly not my fault if the women like me; it's a perfectly simple matter.

ANISYA. Will you love me?

NIKITA (*embracing her*). Won't I though! Just as you have always been in my heart. . . .

SCENE IX

The Same, and MATRIONA

(MATRIONA *enters and stands a long time before the holy images, crossing herself*. NIKITA and ANISYA *start apart*.)

MATRIONA. Now, what I saw, I didn't see; what I heard, I didn't hear. He was having a little fun with the young woman! What of it? Even a calf will gambol, I believe. Why not have a little fun? Young things always do. But, my dear little son, the master is inquiring for you in the yard.

NIKITA. I came in after the ax.

MATRIONA. I know, I know what kind of an ax you are after, brother! It is always pretty near where the women are.

NIKITA (*stoops over and takes up an ax*). Well, mother,⁵ tell me, is it true you are going to have me married? I reckon it is all nonsense. Besides, I don't want to, yet.

MATRIONA. Well, my darling boy, why should you get married. You just go on as you are; this is all the old man's doings. Go on, my son, we will talk it all over, without you.

NIKITA. It's a curious state of things: first marry, and then no matter about it! I don't understand at all and that's the end of it. (*Exit.*)

SCENE X

ANISYA and MATRIONA

ANISYA. Tell me, Aunt Matriona, do you really want him to marry?

⁵ *Matushka*.

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MATRIONA. What should we marry him on, little berry.^o You know how poor we are, don't you? Well, then, my silly old man talks at random: "He shall marry, yes, he shall marry." But his brains aren't deep enough to see how things stand. Horses, they say, don't trot away from their hay, or seek good things away from good things! So it is here. Don't you suppose I see (*winking*) how things lie?

ANISYA. How hide anything from you, Aunt Matriona! You know everything that's going on! I have sinned, I have fallen in love with your son.

MATRIONA. Well, you have told me some news! Aunt Matriona did not know it. Ekh, my little girl. Aunt Matriona has been through the mill and been through the mill. I tell you, little berry, Aunt Matriona can see a fathom into the ground. I know a thing or two, little berry! I know why young wives want sleeping-powders. I have brought some. (*Untying a knot in her handkerchief and taking out a paper of powders.*) What I need to see, that I see; and what I don't need to know, that I don't know and don't know anything about. That's the way of it. And Aunt Matriona was once young herself. You see, she had to know a thing or two in order to get along with her old fool. I know all the seventy-seven tricks. I see, little berry, that your old man has been drying up more and more. What is there keeps life in him? Prick him with a fork, no blood would come out of him. Mark my word, you'll bury him this spring. You'll have to have someone to look after the place. Why wouldn't my little son do as a muzhik? He's not worse than other men. So it wouldn't be for my interest, would it, to take him away from a good job. Would I be an enemy to my own?

ANISYA. If only he would not leave us!

MATRIONA. And he shan't, my swallow! It's all a piece of stupidity. You know, my old man: he has nothing but a commonplace mind, but sometimes when he gets a notion into that pate o' his, it gets stuck like a wedge—you could never pry it out.

ANISYA. What got him into this idea?

MATRIONA. Why, you see, little berry, the boy has a certain way with women—you know how it is yourself; besides, he is a handsome fellow; there's no doubt about that.—Well, you know, he was working on the railroad, and there was a young orphan girl⁷ there as a cook. Well, this girl began to chase after him.

ANISYA. Marinka?

MATRIONA. Yes, may the palsy shake her to pieces! Whatever there was between them, my old man heard about it, either people told him, or she herself came and tattled. . . .

ANISYA. What a bold huzzy!

MATRIONA. And my man—the old fool—up and says, “Let him marry her, yes, marry her, and atone for the sin! We’ll take the young fellow home,” said he, “and marry him.” I said everything I could think of against it; no use. “Well,” thinks I, “all right! Let me try it another way.” Fools like that have to be managed, little berry. All you’ve got to do is to pretend. But when it comes to business, then you can make it go your own way. While a woman is flying down from the oven she has seventy-seven thoughts, you know, so how can he ever catch up with me? “All right,” says I, “it’s a good idea, my dear old man. But we must think it all over. Let’s go,” says I, “and see our little son and talk it over with Piotr Ignatuitch. And see what they will say.” And so here we are.

ANISYA. Oh, auntie,⁸ supposing he does? . . . Supposing his father commands him to?

MATRIONA. Commands him? Stuff his commands up the dog’s tail! Just don’t you worry yourself; this thing shan’t take place; I will sift it and strain it all with your old man and there won’t be anything left. I just came with him for the sake of pretense. Why, here’s my little son living happily, he expects some good luck, and do you think I’m going to marry him to a common street-wench? Do you think I’m a fool?

⁷ *Dyevchenko*, diminutive of *dyevchina*, popular form of *dyeva*, a girl.

⁸ *Tyotushka*, diminutive of *tyotka*.

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ANISYA. Why! she came running after him even here, Marinka did! Would you believe it? . . . Auntie, when they told me he was going to be married a knife seemed to go through my heart. But I think he's fond of the girl.

MATRIONA. Oh, little berry, do you think he is a fool? The idea of his loving a homeless trollop! Mikishka,⁹ you may be sure he is a sensible lad. He knows whom to love. So don't you worry yourself, little berry. We will never take him away from here, as long as he lives. And we won't marry him off either. But just favor us with a little money, so that we can get along.

ANISYA. It seems to me if Nitika should go away I should not care to live any longer.

MATRIONA. That's the way with us when we're young. Can't I understand it? A woman so full of life living with such an old boot! . . .

ANISYA. If you only knew, auntie, how disgusting, how awfully disgusting *he* is—the ugly big-nosed dog! It seems as if I could not bear to look at him.

MATRIONA. Yes, I know all about it. Just look here! (*In a whisper, glancing round.*) You see, I went to this old man after these powders. He gave me a couple of handfuls of the stuff. Just look here. "This," says he, "is a sleeping-powder. Give one," says he, "it will make a man sleep so sound," says he, "that you could walk over him." And says he, "If you mix it with his drink and give it to him, there ain't no smell to it, and yet it's awful strong. It's to be used seven times," says he, "a pinch at a time. Give it to him seven times." And says he, "she'll get her freedom very soon."

ANISYA. O-o-o! what is this?

MATRIONA. "There won't be any signs at all," says he. He asked a little ruble. "Couldn't do it for less," says he. "Because, you may believe they are hard to get." I paid him out of my own, little berry. I said to myself, "May be she'll take 'em; if she don't, I'll let Mikhaïlovna have 'em."

ANISYA. O-o! but maybe some harm will come from them.

⁹ Diminutive of Nikita.

MATRIONA. What harm can there be, little berry? If your muzhik was strong and well, but you know he's barely alive. He isn't going to live long anyway. There are lots of such cases.

ANISYA. O-okh! my poor little head! Auntie, I am afraid that this is a terrible sin. No, tell me what these powders are!

MATRIONA. Well, I can take them back.

ANISYA. Did you say they were both to be taken in water?

MATRIONA. Tea, he said, is better. "You couldn't tell the difference," said he, "there is no smell or taste," said he. He is such a clever man.

ANISYA (*taking the powders*). O-o! my poor little head! I should never have come to such deeds, if it hadn't been for the dog's life I have had to lead.

MATRIONA. Now don't forget the little ruble. I promised to take it to the old man. It caused him a lot of trouble.

ANISYA. Of course it did. (*She goes to the chest and secretes the powders.*)

MATRIONA. Keep them out of sight, little berry, so that no one will know about them. But if any one touches them—God forbid!—remember they are for cockroaches . . . (*taking the ruble*). You see they are good for cockroaches as well . . . (*she suddenly breaks off speaking*).

SCENE XI

The Same, PIOTR, and AKIM

(*AKIM enters and crosses himself before the images.*)

PIOTR (*enters and sits down*). Well, what do you say, Uncle Akim?

AKIM. Well, Ignatuitch, I guess we'd better, yes, we'd better, that is I think we'd better . . . why, if it hadn't been for this . . . his prank, of course, I could wish; you know . . . I should like to have him work, you know. But, of course, if you would only . . . it would be better . . .

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PIOTR. Good, very good. Sit down; let us talk it over. (AKIM *sits down.*) What is it? You want him to get married, do you?

MATRIONA. We can put off getting him married, Piotr Ignatuitch. We're too poor, as you know well, Ignatuitch. How could we get him married when we haven't enough for ourselves? How can he marry?

PIOTR. Decide what you think is best.

MATRIONA. Besides, there's no hurry about his marrying. That kind of an affair's not like a raspberry . . . it won't fall off.

PIOTR. Well, it might be a good thing for him to marry.

AKIM. I should like, you know . . . because, you know of course. . . . You see I found a job in the city, a job, you know . . . good wages, of course . . .

MATRIONA. A job, I should say! To clean out vaults! He came home the other day. I simply vomited, vomited, that's what I did, tfu!

AKIM. Well, of course, at the first, you know, she . . . she threw up, . . . the smell, but you get used to it, it's a trifle, it's nothing . . . of course, it's a little rough, but it's fair pay . . . but the smell, of course. It isn't worth while for such as us to complain about. You can always change your clothes. Of course I should like . . . to have Nikita at home . . . to have him wipe out his own fault, of course. Let him wipe out his own fault at home, and then I'll take the job in the city. . . .

PIOTR. You want your son at home; that's natural. But how about the wages I advanced?

AKIM. Yes, that's so, that's so; of course, you tell the truth, I know it's the rule, he who hires out, sells himself . . . so let him work his time out, of course, . . . but let him come long enough for the wedding, let him off for just a little, of course. . . .

PIOTR. Well, that can be done.

MATRIONA. That's where we disagree. I will open my heart before you, Piotr Ignatuitch, as before God. You decide between me and the old man. He keeps insisting on the lad marrying. But just ask whom he wants him to marry! If the bride were a decent one, do you sup-

pose I'd be an enemy to my own child; but the girl has a spotted reputation.

AKIM. Now that's unjust, I tell you. You see you're unjust, yes, unjust to the girl. Because, this poor girl has been wronged, yes, I tell you, wronged, yes, wronged by my son. Yes, this same girl, you know . . .

PIOTR. What was the wrong?

AKIM. Why, my son did it, don't you know, my son Nikita? My son Nikita did it, don't you know? . . .

MATRIONA. You just stop talking; my tongue goes easier, let me tell the story! Before our son came to you, he worked, you know, on the railroad. And this girl,—a common creature they called Marinka,—she worked there in the gang as cook as she kept chasing after Nikita. And this girl, this very same girl, accuses our son and charges him with deceiving her.

PIOTR. That doesn't look well.

MATRIONA. She's a lazy good-for-nothing, she goes about with men, she's a regular prostitute.

AKIM. 'Tain't so, old woman, you know; 'tain't so, I tell you, 'tain't so.

MATRIONA. That's all my old eagle can say: " 'Tain't, 'tain't, 'tain't." He himself doesn't know what he's talking about! Piotr Ignatutch, don't trust what I say, but ask any one about the girl; every one will say the same thing. She's a homeless good-for-nothing.

PIOTR (*to AKIM*). Why Uncle Akim, if what she says is true, there's no reason why he should marry her. You see a daughter-in-law isn't like a shoe, you can't take it off your foot.

AKIM (*growing excited*). The old woman, I tell you, slanders the girl; 'tain't so, she slanders her. Because the girl's a very good girl, a very good girl, of course she is, and I'm sorry for her, very sorry for her, that's what I am.

MATRIONA. Like the old woman Maremyana, he pities all the world, but his own children sit at home without anything to eat. He's sorry for the girl, but he isn't sorry for his son! Better tie her around your neck and carry her around with you! Stop talking nonsense.

AKIM. But it isn't nonsense!

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MATRIONA. Don't you fly out, just let me speak!

AKIM (*interrupting*). No, but it isn't nonsense. Of course, you turn it to suit yourself,—either about the girl, or about yourself,—you turn it your own way, just as seems best to you, but God, of course, will turn it back to suit himself. That is so.

MATRIONA. Ekh! what's the use of wearing one's tongue out on you?

AKIM. The girl is industrious and decent, and of course, you know . . . around herself, you know, of course. And that's what, you know, we want—extra help—don't you know, in our poverty, and a wedding doesn't cost very much. But the main thing is, the girl has been wronged, an orphan girl, don't you know. She's been wronged . . .

MATRIONA. Of course every girl says . . .

ANISYA. Well, Uncle Akim, you'd better listen to what the women say. They'll tell you. . . .

AKIM. But God, how about God? Is she . . . isn't the girl a human being? Of course she is in God's eye, don't you know. What do you think about that?

MATRIONA. You keep repeating yourself. . . .

PIOTR. Well, Uncle Akim, you see you can't put any dependence on such girls. But the lad is alive. He's right here. Send for him and ask if there's any truth in it. Call the lad here. (*ANISYA gets up.*) Tell him his father wants him. (*Exit ANISYA.*)

SCENE XII

The Same, without ANISYA

MATRIONA. That's it, friend, you've hit on the right plan and washed it as with water, and now let the lad speak for himself. And besides, you know that nowadays you can't force any one to marry. You've got to get the lad's consent. He will never in the world want to marry her and degrade himself. In my opinion best let him live with you and serve you as his master. There's no reason why we should take him home for the

summer; we can hire some one. You just give us a ten-ruble note and let him live on with you!

PIOTR. You are too previous in your speech! Let us have things in order. Finish one thing first and then take up the next!

AKIM. Now see here, Piotr Ignatuitch, I tell you one thing because, of course, you know, it sometimes happens so. You arrange things, you see, as best you can for yourself; but meantime, don't you know, you forget all about God. You think you know best . . . you turn it your way, and lo . . . and you find you have loaded your neck, don't you know; we think we have everything arranged for the best, but it turns out bad, if God is left out.

PIOTR. Of course that's so! We must remember God.

AKIM. Yes, it turns out bad, but if you act according to the law, according to God's way, somehow or other, don't you know, it cheers your heart up. Seems so, you know. So I thought, don't you see, I'd have the lad marry and save him from sin, don't you see. He'd be at home, don't you see, of course, as it ought to be according to law, and I, don't you see, could get my job in the city, of course. It's a job I'd like to have, don't you know. Fair pay. But it's best, don't you know, to act in God's way. You see, she's an orphan. For example, last summer some men got some wood of an overseer. They tried to cheat the overseer. They cheated the overseer, but don't you know, they could not cheat God, and so here . . .

SCENE XIII

The Same, NIKITA and ANYUTKA

NIKITA. Did you want me? (*Sits down and takes out his tobacco.*)

PIOTR (*gently, reproachfully*). Now say, don't you know what's becoming? Your father sends for you, and you dawdle with your tobacco and then you sit down! Come here and stand up.

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(NIKITA takes his stand by the table, leaning on it in a free and easy attitude, and smiling.)

AKIM. Mikishka, a complaint, don't you know, a sort of complaint, you see, has been brought out against you, don't you know. . . .

NIKITA. Who brought the complaint?

AKIM. A complaint? From the girl, from the orphan, don't you know, the complaint comes. From her, don't you know, from Marina, herself, from the girl, yes, a complaint, yes, yes.

NIKITA (*laughs*). That's something remarkable! What kind of a complaint? Who told you that—the girl herself?

AKIM. I'm asking the question, yes, and it is your business, yes, it's your business, don't you see, yes, to answer. Did you promise the girl, that is, you know, did you engage yourself to her, yes?

NIKITA. I don't understand at all what you are talking about.

AKIM. Don't you know, was there any foolishness, yes, any foolishness, don't you know, I mean foolishness between you and her?

NIKITA. Mighty little! Once in a while you joke with the cook when you have nothing else to do, and you play on the harmonica and she would dance to it. What foolishness is there in that?

PIOTR. Don't try to get out of it, Nikita! but answer your father's question in a straightforward manner.

AKIM (*solemnly*). Nikita! You may hide things from men; but you can't hide them from God. Yes, Mikita, think it over, I mean, don't you see, don't try to lie out of it! She is an orphan, don't you see, you can injure her, don't you know, the orphan, I mean, yes. Now you'd better speak out frankly, yes.

NIKITA. Well, now, there's nothing to say at all. I have told you all there is about it, and so I have nothing more to say. (*Growing excited.*) She may say what she pleases. Let her speak as against the dead. But why doesn't she say something about Fedka Mikishkin? I should think it was coming these days to be impossible to have a little fun. But she can say all she wants.

AKIM. Oi, Mikishka! Be careful. A lie will surely out! Tell me, was it so or not?

NIKITA (*aside*). How they do go for me! (*To AKIM.*) I tell you I know nothing about it, I never had anything to do with her. (*Angrily.*) So help me Christ, I hope to die if I did. (*Crosses himself.*) I know nothing whatever about it. (*Silence; NIKITA grows still more heated.*) Why have you planned to make me marry her? Why! it would be a perfect scandal to do such a thing! Nowadays there are no laws to make a man marry against his will. It's perfectly simple! Besides, I have sworn that I know nothing about it.

MATRIONA (*to her husband*). There now, you stupid old fool of a blockhead, you have to believe everything that's told you. All you've done's been to shame the poor boy. The best thing now's to let him go on living as he's been living with the master here. Perhaps the master will give us a ten-ruble note to help our poverty. But the time will come. . . .

PIOTR. Well, what do you say, Uncle Akim?

AKIM (*clucks with his tongue to his son*). Remember, Nikita, the tears of the wronged, don't you know, are never spilt in vain, but always, don't you know, fall on the man's head. Look out for that.

NIKITA. You tend to your own affairs; look out for yourself! (*Sits down.*)

ANYUTKA. I must go and tell mother.¹⁰ (*Runs out.*)

SCENE XIV

PIOTR, AKIM, MATRIONA, and NIKITA

MATRIONA (*to PIOTR*). That's always the way, Piotr Ignatuitch. This stupid man of mine—he's always getting things muddled. If he ever gets a notion into his head, there's no prying it out; only it's too bad to have bothered you for nothing. Let the lad stay on. Keep him—he's your man!

PIOTR. What do you say, Uncle Akim?

¹⁰ *Mamushka.*

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AKIM. Well, don't you see, I can't compel the lad, only 'tain't right. I only wanted, that is to say . . .

MATRIONA. You don't know yourself what a snarl you're in. Let him stay on, as he's staying now. The lad himself doesn't want to go. And as far as he's concerned, we can manage.

PIOTR. There's one thing, Uncle Akim, if you take him away this summer, I shan't need him in the winter. It he's going to stay, he must stay his year out.

MATRIONA. Then let him stay his year out. At home, if we need any help, during the busy season, we can hire it; so let the lad stay, and you will give us a ten-ruble note, to tide us over.

PIOTR. Well, then, shall it be for a year?

AKIM (*sighs*). Well, then, I see, don't you know, I see it's no use.

MATRIONA. Then it is a year, is it, from St. Mitri's Saturday.¹¹ You won't wrong him about his wages, and you'll give us the ten-ruble note for now. Do help us out! (*Stands up and bows.*)

SCENE XV

The Same, ANISYA and ANYUTKA

(*ANISYA sits at one side*)

PIOTR. What say you? If it's all right, then we'll go to the tavern and wet the bargain. Come, Uncle Akim, we'll have a little drink of vodka.

AKIM. I don't drink it, you know, I don't touch spirits.

PIOTR. Well, you can have a little tea.

AKIM. Tea, I confess I like tea. If it's only tea.

PIOTR. Even the women will take a little tea. Come, Nikita, you drive in the sheep and gather up the straw.

NIKITA. All right! (*All go out except NIKITA. It grows dark.*)

¹¹ St. Demetrius's Day is October 26 (O.S.).

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SCENE XVI

NIKITA (*alone*)

NIKITA (*lights a cigarette*). And so they keep saying, "Tell us, tell us, how you amuse yourself with the girls." It takes a long time to tell such stories. "Marry her," they say! If I should marry them all, I should have a heap of wives! Much I need to get married! even as it is I live as well as a married man; men are jealous of me. And how queer when I swore before the images! It was just as if some one jolted me! It knocked the whole thing into a cocked hat! But I've heard it said, it is a terrible thing to swear to a lie. That's all nonsense, nothing but idle talk. It's a very simple matter.

SCENE XVII

NIKITA and AKULINA

AKULINA (*enters in her kaftan, puts away a rope, takes off her things, and goes to the closet*). You might have been making a light!

NIKITA. What for? So as to see you? I can see you as it is!

AKULINA. Stop your nonsense!

SCENE XVIII

The Same, and ANYUTKA

ANYUTKA (*runs in and speaks to NIKITA in a whisper*). Nikita, go quick as you can. Some one's asking for you as true as I am breathing!

NIKITA. Who is it?

ANYUTKA. Marina from the railroad station. She is waiting behind the corner.

NIKITA. You lie!

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ANYUTKA. As true as I'm breathing!

NIKITA. What does she want?

ANYUTKA. She tells you to come. She says, "I must speak just one word to Nikita." I began to ask her what she wanted, but she would not tell me. Only she kept asking if it was true that you were going to leave us. But I told her it was not true, that your father wanted to take you home and make you get married, but that you refused and that you were going to stay with us another year. But she kept saying: "Send him to me, for Christ's sake, I must have a word with him," she insisted. She's been waiting for you for a long time. Now go to her.

NIKITA. The devil take her, why should I go to her?

ANYUTKA. She says if you don't come she will come into the izba herself. As true as I'm breathing, she says so.

NIKITA. Never you fear, she won't dare to come in.

ANYUTKA. And she wanted to know if they were going to marry you to Akulina.

AKULINA (*approaches NIKITA to get her spinning-wheel*). Marry whom to Akulina?

ANYUTKA. Nikita.

AKULINA. Indeed! and who says so?

NIKITA. You see that's what people are saying. (*Looks at her and laughs.*) Tell me, Akulina, would you have me?

AKULINA. Have you? Perhaps I would have, some time ago, but I wouldn't now.

NIKITA. Why wouldn't you now?

AKULINA. Because you wouldn't love me.

NIKITA. Why wouldn't I?

AKULINA. Some one wouldn't let you. (*Laughs.*)

NIKITA. Who wouldn't let me?

AKULINA. Well, my stepmother wouldn't. She's scolding all the time, and she's watching you all the time.

NIKITA (*laughing*). Indeed! Well, you are a sharp eyes!

AKULINA. I? How can I help seeing? Am I blind? This very day she was abusing my father, just abusing him! She's a thick-lipped hag! (*Goes to the closet.*)

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ANYUTKA. Nikita! Just look! (ANYUTKA *looking out of the window*.) She's coming. True as I am a-breathing. Here she is! I'm off! (Exit.)

SCENE XIX

NIKITA, AKULINA (*in the closet*), and MARINA

MARINA (*enters*). Tell me now, what are you going to do for me?

NIKITA. What am I going to do? I am not going to do anything.

MARINA. Are you going to cast me off?

NIKITA (*angrily rising*). I should like to know what you came here for.

MARINA. Akh, Nikita!

NIKITA. You're wonderful, that's a fact! What made you come?

MARINA. Nikita!

NIKITA. "Nikita!" Well, I'm Nikita! What do you want? Get you gone, I tell you!

MARINA. And so I see you throw me off; are you going to forget me?

NIKITA. Why should I remember you? You don't know yourself! There you stood behind the corner and sent Anyutka, and I didn't come. That shows I didn't want you; it's mighty plain. Now, be off with you!

MARINA. Didn't want me? It has come to that, has it? I had faith in you that you would love me. You ruined me, and now you don't want me.

NIKITA. What you say is all nonsense. You have been talking to my father. Be kind enough to go away!

MARINA. You know perfectly well that I never loved any one else but you. Whether you marry me or not I should not be angry with you, I have nothing to reproach myself about concerning you, and why have you ceased to love me? Why is it?

NIKITA. There's nothing whatever for you and me to

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talk over.¹² Now go! You girls are dull about some things.

MARINA. It does not hurt me so much that you deceived me when you promised to marry me,—but that you have ceased to love me. And it does not hurt me so much that you have ceased to love as, as that you have taken some one else in my place, and I know who it is.

NIKITA (*advancing toward her threateningly*). Ekh! there is no sense in talking with such a girl; you can't understand reason. Go, I tell you, or you'll make me mad!

MARINA. Make you mad? What? would you strike me? Strike me, then! Why do you turn away your face? Ekh, Nikita!

NIKITA. If any one should come, it would look bad. What is the use of such talk?

MARINA. And so this is the end of it! it means it is all over! You tell me to forget. Well, remember, Nikita, I treasured my maiden honor dearer than my eyes. You ruined me, you deceived me. You have no pity on an orphan girl (*she weeps*), you have forsaken me. You have killed me, but I will not bear you any malice. God forgive you. If you find a better wife, you will forget me; if you find a worse one, then you will remember me. Yes, you will remember me, Nikita! Good-by, since it is to be! Oh, how I have loved you! Good-by, for the last time! (*She tries to embrace him, and seizes him by the head.*)

NIKITA (*avoiding her*). Ekh! I have had enough of your talk! If you won't go, then I will; you stay here!

MARINA (*screams*). You are a wild beast! (*On the threshold.*) God will not grant you happiness!
(*Exit, weeping.*)

¹² *Perelivat' iz pustova f porozhnoye*, to decant from empty into empty.

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SCENE XX

NIKITA and AKULINA

AKULINA (*reënters from closet*). You are a perfect dog, Nikita.

NIKITA. What do you mean?

AKULINA. How she screamed! (*Weeps.*)

NIKITA. What are you crying for?

AKULINA. What am I crying for? You have wronged her. You would wrong me in the same way . . . you dog! (*Goes into the closet.*)

SCENE XXI

NIKITA (*alone*)

NIKITA (*a silence.*) It's all a muddle! I love these women as I do sugar. But if you commit a sin with them, . . . it makes a row!

Curtain

ACT II

The stage represents the street and PIOTR's izba. At the spectator's left, the izba in two parts, the porch and steps in the center; at the right the gates and end of the dvor. At the end of the dvor ANISYA is stripping hemp. Since the First Act six months have elapsed.

SCENE I

ANISYA (*alone*)

ANISYA (*pauses and listens*). He's muttering again. He must have crawled down from the oven.

SCENE II

ANISYA, and AKULINA (*entering with her buckets on the yoke*)

ANISYA. He is calling! Go and see what he wants! Hear him bawling!

AKULINA. But why don't you go?

ANISYA. Go, I say!

(AKULINA *enters the izba.*)

SCENE III

ANISYA (*alone*)

ANISYA. He has tormented me to death! won't tell me where the money is or anything else. Lately he was in the entry; he must have hid it there. And now I don't know where it is. I'm thankful he's afraid to part with

it: it's all in the house. If I could only find it. It wasn't on him yesterday. And now I don't know where it is at all. He's tormented me to death!

SCENE IV

ANISYA, and AKULINA (*who enters, wrapping her kerchief round her head*)

ANISYA. Where are you going?

AKULINA. Where? Well, he wanted me to fetch Aunt Marfa. "Bring my sister to me," says he. "I'm dying," says he; "I have something I must tell her."

ANISYA (*aside*). He is sending for his sister! Oh, my poor head! O-o! It must be he is going to give her the money. What shall I do? Oh! (*To AKULINA.*) Don't go! Hold on, where are you going?

AKULINA. After auntie.

ANISYA. Don't you go, I say, I'll go myself. You go down to the river with the washing. Or else you won't have time before evening.

AKULINA. But he commanded me to.

ANISYA. Go where I tell you; I myself will go after Marfa. Take the shirts from the fence.

AKULINA. The shirts? But see here, you won't go, I'm afraid. He told me to.

ANISYA. I have told you I will go. Where is Anyutka?

AKULINA. Anyutka? She's watching the calves.

ANISYA. Send her to me; they probably won't get lost.
(AKULINA *collects the washing and exit.*)

SCENE V

ANISYA (*alone*)

ANISYA. If she doesn't come, he'll be mad. If she comes, he'll give her the money. Then all my pains will be lost. I don't know what to do about it! My head is splitting. (*She continues to work.*)

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SCENE VI

ANISYA, and MATRIONA (*enters with a staff and a small bundle as if for traveling*)

MATRIONA. God be your help, little berry!

ANISYA (*looks around, throws down her work, and claps her hands with joy*). I was not expecting this, auntie. God sent the right guest at the right time!

MATRIONA. Well, how is it?

ANISYA. My mind is in a perfect whirl! It's misery.

MATRIONA. They say he's still alive?

ANISYA. Don't speak of it! He's neither dead nor alive!

MATRIONA. Whom has he given his money to?

ANISYA. He has just sent after Marfa, his sister. It must be about the money.

MATRIONA. Probably. Hasn't he given it to some one without your knowing about it?

ANISYA. No, indeed! I watch him like a hawk.

MATRIONA. But where can it be?

ANISYA. He will not tell. I can't worm it out of him. He hides it sometimes in one place, sometimes in another, and Akulina manages to keep in my way all the time. The fool, she is always spying and on guard. Oh, my poor head! I have been tormented.

MATRIONA. Okh! little berry, he will be giving his money out of your hands, and you will mourn all your days. They'll be turning you out of house and home without a thing. You've worn yourself out, my heart's darling, worn yourself out living all your days with an old curmudgeon, and when you are a widow you'll be nothing but a beggar!

ANISYA. Oh, don't speak of it, auntie! My heart is sick and I don't know what to do, and there's no one to advise me. I have spoken to Nikita, but he's afraid to meddle in this thing. Only last evening he told me it was under the floor.

MATRIONA. Well, did you crawl under?

ANISYA. I couldn't. He was there himself. I notice he sometimes carries it on him and sometimes hides it.

MATRIONA. Remember, my dear girl, if you miss your stroke this time you can never set it right again. (*In a whisper.*) Tell me, did you give him the strong tea!

ANISYA. O-o (*She is about to reply, but sees a neighbor and holds her tongue.*)

SCENE VII

The Same, and a woman of the neighborhood (who passes the izba and listens to the calls from within)

WOMAN¹ (*to ANISYA*). Neighbor! Anisya! say, Anisya! Your man seems to be calling you.

ANISYA. He is always coughing like that. It sounds as if he were calling. He's very sick.

WOMAN (*approaches MATRIONA*). How are you, granny,² where are you from?

MATRIONA. Oh, I came from home, dear heart. I came to see my young son. I have brought him some shirts. You know, one must look after one's child.

WOMAN. That's a fact. (*To ANISYA*.) I was going to bleach my linen, but I think it's rather early. Folks haven't begun yet.

ANISYA. What is your hurry?

MATRIONA. Tell me, have they administered the communion yet?

ANISYA. Yes, the priest was here yesterday.

WOMAN (*to MATRIONA*). I had a glimpse of him yesterday, too, my dear;³ his soul was just hanging by a thread. How thin he's grown! And several days ago, my dear, he was at the point of death; they'd put him under the images. And they were getting ready to weep over him and wash his corpse.

ANISYA. He's come back to life again and got around. He'll be out now.

MATRIONA. Well, shall you give him extreme unction?

ANISYA. Folks advise me to. If he's alive, we'll send for the priest to-morrow.

¹ Kuma, a gossip, godmother, family friend.

² Baushka, for babushka.

³ Matushka moya.

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WOMAN. Oh! it must be dull for you, Anisyushka, isn't it? 'Taint for nothing, folks say:

Not so sick is he who is sick indeed,
As the one that serves the sick man's need.

ANISYA. If it would be only one thing!

WOMAN. To be sure! he's been dying-like for a whole year. It's hard lines! It just ties our hands.

MATRIONA. Yet being a widow is bitter business. It's well enough, if you're young; but who'll look after you if you're on in years! Old age is a trying stage! At least it is in my case. I haven't come very far, but I'm half dead. My feet are played out. . . . Where's my son?

ANISYA. Plowing. But come in, I will start the samovar, and you can cheer up your spirits with a little tea.

MATRIONA (*sits down*). Well, I'm just dead tired, dearie. As for giving him extreme unction, you certainly ought to do it. Folks say it is a good thing for the soul.

ANISYA. Yes, we'll send for the priest to-morrow.

MATRIONA. That's the idea. You'd better. We've had a wedding at our village, girlie!

WOMAN. What's that! In spring?

MATRIONA. Well, you see, the proverb is not without sense: When a poor man marries even the night is short. Semyon Matveyevitch has taken Marinka.

ANISYA. Well, she seems to have found luck, somehow!

WOMAN. I suppose he's a widower with children?

MATRIONA. Four! What sensible woman would do such a thing! Well, he took her as she was. She was glad enough! They drank their wine, though the glass was broken and they spilt some of it.

WOMAN. Just think of it! Did it make talk? Has her husband got any property?

MATRIONA. They manage to live so far.

WOMAN. Strange enough that any one would go and marry where there are children! Now, how would it be with our Mikhailo! That muzhik, my dear . . .

A MUZHNIK'S VOICE. Hey, Mavra! what the devil's become of you? Go and drive in the cow.

(*Exit the WOMAN.*)

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SCENE VIII

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ANISYA and MATRIONA

MATRIONA (*speaks in an even voice as long as the neighbor is within hearing.*) They are married, girlie, thank goodness, and at least my old fool won't be thinking of her for Mikishka any more. (*She suddenly changes her voice to a whisper.*) She's gone! I say, did you give him that tea to drink?

ANISYA. Don't mention it. It would be better if he died a natural death. As it is, he doesn't die at all. I've laden my soul with a sin! O-oh, my poor head! Why did you give me those powders?

MATRIONA. What powders? They were only sleeping-powders, girlie; what harm in giving them? No harm from them!

ANISYA. I'm not speaking about the sleeping-powders, but about the others, those white ones.

MATRIONA. Why those, little berry, were only medicine!

ANISYA (*sighs*). I know, but I feel troubled. He has tormented me.

MATRIONA. Tell me, how much did you use?

ANISYA. I gave it to him twice.

MATRIONA. Tell me, did he notice it?

ANISYA. I myself touched my lips to his tea; it tasted a little bitter. But he drank it with his tea and he said, "Even my tea is repulsive to me!" I said, "Everything tastes bitter to a sick man." It filled me with dread, auntie.

MATRIONA. But don't think about it; when you think about it you feel worse.

ANISYA. It would have been better if you had not given them to me and led me into sin. Whenever I remember it, it harrows up my soul. Why, why did you give them to me?

MATRIONA. What are you talking about, little berry? Christ be with you. What are you charging me with now? Look here, girlie, don't you shift the blame where

it don't belong.⁴ If anything happens, I wash my hands of it; I know nothing, absolutely nothing. I will kiss the cross that I never gave any powders, and never saw any, and never heard that there were such things as powders.

Think it over, girlie. We have been talking about you lately, how tormented you have been, poor heart. Your stepdaughter a fool and your muzhik rotten,—one long misery! With such a life what wouldn't one do?

ANISYA. That is so, I don't deny it. My life is such that it leaves me with nothing else to do but either hang myself or choke him! Is this living?

MATRIONA. That's just the point! It's no time to be gaping. Someway or other, you must hunt up that money, and give him the drink.

ANISYA. O-oh, my poor head! And what am I to do now? I'm sure I don't know, and I'm frightened; it would be better if he should die a natural death. I don't like to have this thing on my soul.

MATRIONA (*angrily*). But why doesn't he tell you where his money is? He won't take it with him, will he? Is no one to have the good of it? Is there any sense in that? God have mercy! all that money wasted! Isn't that a sin? What is he doing? Why don't you watch him?

ANISYA. I'm sure I don't know. He has tormented me.

MATRIONA. Why don't you know? The matter is plain enough. If you miss your stroke now, you'll regret it as long as you live. He'll be giving the money to his sister and you'll be left!

ANISYA. O-okh! he was just sending for her; I must go and get her.

MATRIONA. Yes, go if you want, but first start the samovar. We will give him some tea to drink, and then we two will hunt for the money. We'll find it, never fear.

ANISYA. O-o! suppose something were to happen?

MATRIONA. What might happen? What do you expect? Do you want to have that money under your very

⁴Literally, from a sick head to a well one.

eyes, and then let it fall out of your hands? Do what I say.

ANISYA. Well, I'll go and start the samovar.

MATRIONA. Go, little berry, do the best you can so as not to regret it afterward. Things are as they are. (*ANISYA starts to go. MATRIONA calls her back.*)

MATRIONA. There's one thing; don't tell Nikita about all this. He is rather foolish; God forbid he should learn about the powders! God knows what he would do. He's very tender-hearted. You know, he could never kill a hen. So don't you tell him. It would be a misfortune; he would not approve of this.

(*She stops in horror; for on the threshold appears PIOTR.*)

SCENE IX

The Same, and PIOTR

PIOTR (*holding by the wall, crawls out on the porch, and calls in a feeble voice*). You never come when you are called. O-okh! Anisya, who is here?

ANISYA (*comes out from behind the corner*). Why do you come crawling out? You'd better lie where you were lying.

PIOTR. Tell me, has the girl gone after Marfa? I'm in distress. . . . Oh, would that death would come soon! . . .

ANISYA. She's had no time as yet; I sent her down to the river. Give me time, I'll go myself as soon as I get the work done.

PIOTR. Send Anyutka! Where is she? Okh! I'm in distress. Okh! I'm dying.

ANISYA. I have already sent for her.

PIOTR. Okh! Where is she?

ANISYA. Wherever she is, the paralysis smash her!

PIOTR. Okh! I can't bear it! I'm all on fire inside. It's like a worm boring. Why have you left me alone like a dog? And no one to give me a drink. Okh! . . . Send Anyutka to me.

ANISYA. Here she is. Anyutka, go to your father.

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SCENE X

The Same, and ANYUTKA (who comes running in as ANISYA goes around the corner)

PIOTR. Go to your Aunt Marfa! Okh! tell her your father wants her. I must see her.

ANYUTKA. Anything else?

POITR. Wait! Tell her to come quick; tell her I'm just dying. O-oh!

ANYUTKA. Only let me get my kerchief, and I'll go in a jiffy. *(Exit, running.)*

SCENE XI

PIOTR, ANISYA, and MATRIONA

MATRIONA *(winking)*. Well, girlie, remember what you've got to do. Go into the izba and hunt everywhere. Search as a dog searches for fleas; turn everything over, and I'll manage to search him.

ANISYA *(to MATRIONA)*. Somehow or other I feel much bolder with you. *(Goes to the porch. To PIOTR.)* Shall I start the samovar for you? And Aunt Matriona has come to see her son. You shall have tea together.

PIOTR. All right, get it ready. *(Exit ANISYA into izba.)*

SCENE XII

PIOTR and MATRIONA

(MATRIONA approaches the porch)

PIOTR. How are you?

MATRIONA. Good-day, benefactor. How do you do, dear friend? I can see you are under the weather. And my old man pities you. Go, says he, and find out. He sent his greeting. *(Bows several times.)*

PIOTR. I am dying.

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MATRIONA. Well, as I look at you, Ignatuitch, it's plain sickness does not wander off in the forest, but comes among men. You're all wasted away, dear heart, all wasted away, I can see by looking at you. Sickness does not add to one's beauty, now does it?

PIOTR. My death is at hand.

MATRIONA. Well, Piotr Ignatuitch, 't is God's will! They've given you the communion, they will give you supreme unction, if God permits. Your wife is a sensible woman, glory be to God, and she will give you a good funeral and have prayers said for you, all in a decent way. And my little son, meantime, will help about the house.

PIOTR. No one manages things. Wife slack and occupied with trifles. You see I know all about it . . . I know! . . . The girl frivolous and young besides! I have got an estate, and now there's no one to look after it, and I'm so sick! (*He sobs.*)

MATRIONA. Well, if you have any money or anything you can bequeath it. . . .

PIOTR (*to ANISYA in the entry*). Tell me, has she gone? Has Anyutka gone?

MATRIONA (*aside*). There, he still remembers!

ANISYA (*in entry*). She's just gone. Do go back into the izba, and I will help you.

PIOTR. Let me sit here for the last time. The air is so stifling inside. . . . It distresses me. . . . Okh! my heart is all on fire. . . . If death would only come!

MATRIONA. Unless God takes the soul, the soul itself can't go; God rules in life and in death, Piotr Ignatuitch. You can't even foretell your own death. It might be you'd get up even now. There was a case like yours in the village; the man was on the point of death . . .

PIOTR. No! I feel that I shall die to-day, I feel it. (*He leans back and closes his eyes.*)

SCENE XIII

The Same, and ANISYA

ANISYA (*enters*). Well, are you coming or not? I can't keep waiting for you. Petra! say, Petra!

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MATRIONA (*steps out and beckons to ANISYA*). Well, how was it?

ANISYA (*comes down from the steps and joins MATRIONA*). No use!

MATRIONA. Have you hunted everywhere? Under the floor?

ANISYA. No, it's not there, either; maybe it's in the shed.⁵ He was crawling about there yesterday.

MATRIONA. Search, search with all your might. Lick it up as with your tongue. I'm perfectly certain he'll die to-day; his nails are blue, his face is earth-color. Did you set the samovar going?

ANISYA. It is almost boiling.

SCENE XIV

The Same, and NIKITA

NIKITA (*enters from the other side, if possible riding on horseback up to the gates, does not see PIOTR. Addressing his mother*). How are you, matushka; all well at home?

MATRIONA. Thank the Lord God, we are alive, since we get our daily bread.

NIKITA. Well, how do you find the master?

MATRIONA. Hush, there he is. (*She points to the porch.*)

NIKITA. Well, let him sit there. What is it to me?

PIOTR (*opens his eyes.*) Nikita, O Nikita, come here! (*NIKITA approaches. ANISYA whispers with MATRIONA.*) Why are you back so early?

NIKITA. I have finished plowing.

PIOTR. Did you plow the patch beyond the bridge?

NIKITA. 'Twas too far to go there.

PIOTR. Too far! It will be still farther from the house. You'll have to go there on purpose. You might have made one job of it. (*ANISYA, without showing herself, listens.*)

⁵ *Punka*, diminutive of *punya*, ordinarily the fodder-shed, but often used in summer as a sleeping-room by the muzhik.

MATRIONA (*approaches*). Oh, my son, why don't you try to please your master? The master's ailing, and trusts to you; you ought to serve him as if he were your own father; strain every nerve, and serve him as I have bidden you.

PIOTR. Then you may . . . okh . . . you may get . . . get the potatoes; the women . . . oh . . . they'll sort them.

ANISYA (*to herself*). I think I have found where it is. He wants to send us all away again; he must have the money on him now. He wants to hide it somewhere.

PIOTR. Or else . . . o-okh . . . when the time comes to sow them, they'll be rotten. . . . Okh! My strength is gone. (*Gets up.*)

MATRIONA (*runs to the porch and helps PIOTR up*). Do you want to be helped into the izba?

PIOTR. Yes, help me in. (*Pauses.*) Nikita!

NIKITA (*gruffly*). What more do you want?

PIOTR. I shall not see you again . . . I shall die this day. . . . Pardon me for Christ's sake, pardon me if I have sinned before you . . . if in word or deed, I have done you any injury . . . both may have been. Pardon me!

NIKITA. What is there to pardon, we are all sinners.

MATRIONA. Akh, my dear son, show some feeling!

PIOTR. Forgive me for Christ's sake. (*Weeps.*)

NIKITA (*snuffles*). God will forgive, Uncle Piotr. I have nothing to complain of against you, you have never done me any harm. You must forgive me, maybe I am more to blame toward you. (*Weeps. PIOTR exit, whimpering. MATRIONA supports him.*)

SCENE XV

NIKITA and ANISYA

ANISYA. Oh, my poor head! There is some hidden meaning he has, that is evident. (*Goes to NIKITA.*) You said the money was under the floor . . . it isn't there.

NIKITA (*makes no reply, weeps*). He never did me

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any harm, nothing but good, and what have I done for him?

ANISYA. Now hush up. Where is the money?

NIKITA (*angrily*). Who knows anything about it? Hunt for it yourself!

ANISYA. Why are you so painfully compassionate?

NIKITA. I'm sorry for him. How sorry I am! How he wept! E-ekh!

ANISYA. What a tender-hearted fellow you are. He treated you like a dog, like a dog, I say, and he just ordered me to drive you out of the house. You'd better feel sorry for me!

NIKITA. Why should I pity you?

ANISYA. He'll die, and hide the money.

NIKITA. Never fear! he won't hide it.

ANISYA. Okh! Mikitushka! He has sent for his sister, he's going to give it to her. It will be a misfortune to us! How shall we live if he gives away the money? They will turn me out of house and home. You'd better be helping me! Didn't you say he was crawling in the shed last evening?

NIKITA. I saw him coming from there, but who knows where he hid the money.

ANISYA. Oh, my poor head! I will go and look for it there.

(NIKITA *steps aside.*)

SCENE XVI

The Same, and MATRIONA

MATRIONA (*comes out from the izba, goes down the steps to ANISYA and NIKITA, in a whisper*). Don't go; the money's on him; I felt of it; it's attached to a string.

ANISYA. Oh, my poor head!

MATRIONA. If you don't look now, search for it on the eagle, on the right wing!⁶ His sister'll be coming and then good-by to it!

ANISYA. And if she comes, he will give it to her. Then what shall we do? Oh, my head!

⁶ Russian proverb.

MATRIONA. What will you do? Just you look here! The samovar is boiling. Go and make the tea and pour into it (*in a whisper*) all the rest of the powder from the paper, and give it to him. When he has drunk the tea, then search him. Never you fear, he won't tell on you.

ANISYA. Oh, I'm afraid.

MATRIONA. Don't say anything about this, but just look alive. I'll keep his sister out if she comes. Don't make any mistakes. Get hold of the money, and bring it here, and Nikita will hide it.

ANISYA. Oh, my head! How shall I accomplish it and . . . and . . .

MATRIONA (*to ANISYA*). Make haste; do what I tell you.—Nikita!

NIKITA. What?

MATRIONA. You stay here, sit down on the terrace, if anything . . . there may be some work for you.

NIKITA (*waves his hand*). These women are always scheming! They make me tired, and that's the end of it! Now I'll let you do what you want by yourselves, and I'll go and get the potatoes.

MATRIONA (*detaining him by the arm*). I tell you, wait!

SCENE XVII

The Same, and ANYUTKA

ANISYA. Well?

ANYUTKA (*entering*). She was in her daughter's garden; she'll be here right away.

ANISYA. She's coming! what shall we do?

MATRIONA (*to ANISYA*). Make haste; do what I tell you.

ANISYA. I no longer know what I am doing. I know nothing at all. My mind is all in a whirl, Anyutka, little daughter,⁷ go to the calves; I'm afraid they have gone astray. Oh, my courage is all gone!

MATRIONA. Go on, why don't you; the samovar'll be boiling over, I'm afraid.

ANISYA. Okh, my poor head! (*Exit.*)

⁷ *Donyushka*, affectionate diminutive of *dotch*, daughter.

SCENE XVIII

MATRIONA and NIKITA

MATRIONA (*approaching her son*). Well, little son (*she sits down next NIKITA on the earth embankment*), you must think also of your affairs, and not let them go at loose ends.

NIKITA. What affairs?

MATRIONA. Why, how you are going to live in the world.

NIKITA. How I'm to live in the world? I shall live as other men do.

MATRIONA. The old man is surely going to die to-day.

NIKITA. If he dies, may the kingdom of Heaven be his! What is that to me?⁸

MATRIONA (*all the time she is speaking she keeps looking at the porch*). Ekh! little son! The living must think of living! Here, little berry, much brains is required. You'd hardly think it, but I've been running all over creation in your behalf. My legs are all tired out in doing this job for you. But don't you forget what I've done for you.

NIKITA. What have you been working about?

MATRIONA. About your affairs; yes, about your interests. If you don't attend to things in good season, they go wrong. You know Ivan Moseitch. Well, I went to see him the other day. You see I had some business with him, and I sat down and we had a talk. And says I to him, "Ivan Moseitch, decide one matter for me. Suppose," says I, "a muzhik is a widower, and suppose he's married a second wife; and suppose he has children, a daughter by his first wife and a daughter by his second wife. Now," says I, "suppose he dies; could his widow marry another man

⁸ *Pomret, tsarstvo nyebyesnoye. Mnye-to-chto?* This reply of Nikita's well illustrates the condensed staccato utterance of the peasant talk. Literally it is: "Dies, Tsardom of Heaven. To me, what?" Often a long and complicated concept is hidden in the phrase *to-to*, which means this-this, the contracted form of which, *tayo*, constitutes a large part of Akim's limited vocabulary.—Tr.

and live on his estate? And," says I, "could this man marry off the two daughters and remain the master of the place?"—"Yes," says he, "only it would make considerable trouble," says he; "it can be managed if there's money," says he, "but without money nothing could be done."

NIKITA (*laughs*). It's easy enough to say. Just pay him the money. Every one needs money.

MATRIONA. Well, little berry, I told him just how things stood. "First thing," says he, "your little son wants to be inscribed in that village, and money's needed for that—he'll have to treat the elders. Of course," says he, "they'll sign the papers. Everything," says he, "must be done intelligently." Just look here (*takes a paper out of her handkerchief*), here's a document he wrote out. Now you read it, you're up to it.

(NIKITA *reads*, MATRIONA *listens*.)

NIKITA. The document is an agreement, that's all. It don't take much wisdom for that.

MATRIONA. Now listen to what Ivan Moseitch said:—"Above all," says he, "auntie, be careful and don't let the money go. If she hasn't got the money," says he, "they won't let her marry again. Money," says he, "is the main-spring⁹ of everything." So be careful. This business, my son, has reached a crisis.

NIKITA. What difference does that make to me? Let her look after her own money.

MATRIONA. What nonsense you talk, my son! How can a woman think of such things? Even if she gets the money, what can she do with it? You know what a woman is, and you are a man. Of course you can hide it, and all that sort of thing. You have more sense if anything happens.

NIKITA. Ekh! women's brains are no good at all!

MATRIONA. No good at all! You rake in the money! The woman will be in your power. If she should begin to snore a little or anything you can turn on the screws.

NIKITA. Confound you all! I'm going!

⁹ *Golova*, head.

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SCENE XIX

NIKITA, MATRIONA, and ANISYA

ANISYA (*runs out from the izba and joins MATRIONA behind the corner; she looks pale.*) It was on him. Here it is. (*Indicates something under her apron.*)

MATRIONA. Give it to Nikita; he'll hide it. Nikita, take and hide it somewhere.

NIKITA. All right, give it to me!

ANISYA. Okh, my head! I'll attend to it myself. (*Starts for the gates.*)

MATRIONA (*sieves her by the arm*). Where are you going? They'll catch you; here's his sister coming; give it to him! he knows; what a stupid!

ANISYA (*stops irresolutely*). Oh, my head!

NIKITA. Say, give it to me; I'll stow it away.

ANISYA. Where will you stow it?

NIKITA. Are you afraid? (*Laughs.*)

SCENE XX

The Same, and AKULINA (who comes with the wash)

ANISYA. O-okh, my poor head! (*Hands over the money.*) Nikita, look out!

NIKITA. What are you afraid of? I'll hide it where I can't find it myself. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XXI

MATRIONA, ANISYA, and AKULINA

ANISYA (*stands in a state of terror*). O-okh! suppose he——

MATRIONA. Say, is he dead?

ANISYA. Yes, I think so. I took it from him and he did not stir.

MATRIONA. Go into the izba! Here comes Akulina!

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ANISYA. There now ; I have committed the sin, and he's got the money.

MATRIONA. Hush up! Go into the izba! Here comes Marfa!

ANISYA. Well, I have trusted it to him. What'll happen now?
(Exit.)

SCENE XXII

MARFA, AKULINA, MATRIONA

MARFA (*enters from one side, AKULINA from the other. To AKULINA*). I should have come sooner, but I was at my daughter's. Well, how is the old man? Is he like to die?

AKULINA (*puts down the washing*). Who knows? I have been down at the river.

MARFA (*pointing to MATRIONA*). Who is this woman?

MATRIONA. I'm from Zuevo. I'm Nikita's mother, and I'm from Zuevo, my dear. How do you do? Your brother, poor heart, is fading away, fading away. He came out a little while ago. "Send for my dear sister," says he, "because" . . . Oh, can it be that he is dead?

SCENE XXIII

The Same, and ANISYA

ANISYA (*comes out from the izba with a shriek, clutches the post and begins to howl*). O-okh! O-o-o-o! to who-o-o-o-m have you left me—O-o-o-o miserable widow—O-o-o! for long, long years! why did you close your bright eyes!—

SCENE XXIV

The Same, and the NEIGHBORING WOMAN (KUMA)

(*The WOMAN and MATRIONA support her under the arms. AKULINA and MARFA enter the izba. Enter a crowd of neighbors.*)

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A VOICE FROM AMONG THE POPULACE. Send for the old women; let them get him ready for the funeral.

MATRIONA (*tucks up her sleeves*). Is there any water in the kettle? If not, there is some still in the samovar. I think I will take hold too.

Curtain

ACT III

SCENE I

PIOTR'S *izba*. Winter. Nine months have passed since Act II. ANISYA, in everyday attire, sits at the loom. weaving. ANYUTKA on the oven.

MITRITCH (*the old laborer, enters slowly, takes off his things*). O Lord, have mercy! Hasn't the master come in yet?

ANISYA. What?

MITRITCH. Hasn't Nikita come from town yet?

ANISYA. No, not yet.

MITRITCH. Probably carousing, O Lord!

ANISYA. Did you put things in order in the barn?

MITRITCH. Of course I did. I put everything away in order and covered everything with straw. I don't like slipshod ways. O Lord! St. Nicholas the Merciful! (*He picks his calluses.*) Anyway, it should be time for him to come.

ANISYA. Why should he be in a hurry? He has money. He's having a good time with the girl, I suppose . . .

MITRITCH. If he has money, why shouldn't he have a good time? But why did Akulina go to town?

ANISYA. Just ask her why the devil she went.

MITRITCH. Why she went to town? In town there are many things to be got for money! O Lord!

ANYUTKA. O matushka, I heard it myself: Says he, "I'll buy you a pretty shawl.¹ As true as I live I will," says he; "you shall choose it yourself," and she dressed herself up just fine! she put on her velveteen jacket and her French kerchief.

ANISYA. Her maiden modesty reaches only to the threshold, but when she gets out, she forgets all about it. The impudent wretch!

¹ *Polushalchik*, diminutive of *polushal*, half shawl.

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MITRITCH. Away with you! What is there to be modest about? When there's money, then have a good time! O Lord! Won't dinner be ready soon? (ANISYA *keeps silent*.) At any rate, I'll warm myself a little. (*Climbs up on the oven*.) O Lord, O Holy Virgin, Mother of God! O Saint Mikola!

SCENE II

The Same, and the KUMA

KUMA (*enters*). Hasn't your man come back yet?
ANISYA. No.

KUMA. It's time for him. May he not have stopped at our inn? Sister Fekla was saying, matushka, that lots of sledges from town were standing there.

ANISYA. Anyutka! Oh, Anyutka!

ANYUTKA. What is it?

ANISYA. Run to the inn, Anyutka, and look. Perhaps he stopped there for a drink.

ANYUTKA (*springs down from the oven, puts on her things*). I'll go.

KUMA. And did he take Akulina with him?

ANISYA. There would not have been any reason for him to go, otherwise. Everything he does is because of her. He had to draw some money from the bank, he said: but she sets him up to everything.

KUMA (*shakes her head*). You don't say! (*Silence*.)

ANYUTKA (*in the door*). And if he's there, what shall I say?

ANISYA. Only just see if he's there.

ANYUTKA. All right, I'll fly over in a jiffy. (*Exit*.)

SCENE III

ANISYA, MITRITCH, and KUMA

(*Long silence*)

MITRITCH (*roars*). O Lord, merciful St. Nicholas!

KUMA (*shudders*). Oh, how that scared me! who is it?

ANISYA. It's Mitritch, the farm hand.

KUMA. O-o-kh! It made me tremble! I had forgotten. But they say, neighbor, that you're going to marry Akulina off: is that so?

ANISYA (*comes out from behind the loom and sits down at the table*). There was an offer came from Dyed-lovo, but you see some gossip must have reached 'em; for after they sent to us, there was nothing more said. So it has fallen through. Who would want her?

KUMA. How about the Lizunofs from Zuevo?

ANISYA. There was some proposition of the sort. But that fell through—he wouldn't take her either.

KUMA. Well, you ought to marry her off.

ANISYA. That is so. But I don't know how to get her out of the house, neighbor; I can't manage it. He doesn't want it; nor does she either. You see he hasn't got tired yet of traipsing round with her.

KUMA. E-e-e! what a sin! Who'd ever thought it! Why he's her stepfather!

ANISYA. Oh! neighbor! they deceived me, they threw dust in my eyes so cleverly, I can't begin to tell you! I was such a fool, I never noticed anything, I never dreamed of such a thing when I married him—not the least wee bit of a suspicion² but I have no doubt they'd already begun to be intimate!

KUMA. O-o what actions!

ANISYA. As time went on, I saw they were beginning to hide something from me. Ah! neighbor, how bad I felt! What a wretched life I have been leading! I'd better never have loved him.

KUMA. You don't say!

ANISYA. And think how it hurts me to endure such an insult from him! Oh! it hurts!

KUMA. How is it? They say he's begun to treat you cruelly.

ANISYA. It's all true—it used to be he was peaceable when he was drunk. And it is a fact he got drunk very often and I was good to him. But nowadays when he is set up, he comes down on me so, it seems as if he would

² *Nitchevokhon'ko*, diminutive of *Nitchevo*, nothing.

trample me under his feet. A day or two ago he grabbed my hair, and I thought he would pull it out by the roots. And then the girl is worse than a snake! I didn't know the earth brought forth such vipers.

KUMA. O-o-o! Neighbor, you are in tribulation! I'm amazed at you! How much you have to endure! You took him in when he was a beggar, and now he treats you so shabbily. Why don't you make a protest against it?

ANISYA. Oh, my dear neighbor,³ what can I do—with my heart? My late husband was rather stern, but I twisted him as I pleased; I can't do so here, neighbor. As soon as I set eyes on him, my whole heart melts within me. I have no courage against him. I'm just like a wet chicken when I'm with him.

KUMA. O-o neighbor. Evidently something has bewitched you! They say Matriona meddles with such matters. It must be she did it.

ANISYA. Yes, I've thought the same thing, neighbor. You see this is the second time I've been harmed. It seems as if I could tear him to pieces! But when I see him, it's no use; I can't feel angry with him.

KUMA. It's evident you're under a spell. It doesn't take long to ruin a person. As soon as I look at you I see something has happened to you.

ANISYA. My legs have shrunk as thin as young lindens. But you should look at that fool, Akulina. She used to be a disorderly, slatternly girl, but now look at her! What made the change? And the things he gives her! She wears fine things and swells up like a bubble on water. She may be a fool, but she's got an idea into her head: "I'm mistress here," says she. "It's my house, and batyushka wanted me to marry him. She's ugly, too, God forgive me. She's got such a temper that she'd pull the thatch from the roof!"

KUMA. O-okh! I see what a life you lead. And yet folks envy you. They say you're rich, but I know that tears often run over gold.

ANISYA. Good reason for envy! Yes, and all our

³ *Okh, kumushka milaya; kumushka, diminutive of kuma, gossip.*

money is going like the dew! It's awful the way he squanders it.

KUMA. But, neighbor, why were you so awful simple as to let him have it? It's your money!

ANISYA. If you only knew all about it! But then I made one great mistake.

KUMA. If I were in your place, neighbor, I should go straight to the nachalnik,—to the chief officer. The money's yours. How can he waste it? He has no right to!

ANISYA. They don't regard such things nowadays.

KUMA. Oh, neighbor, I'm sorry for you. You have grown weak.

ANISYA. I have grown weak, my dear, very weak. He has used me all up. And I know nothing at all. O-oh my poor head!

KUMA. Who can that be coming

(She listens. The door opens and AKIM enters.)

SCENE IV

The Same, and AKIM

AKIM (*crosses himself, shakes off his bark shoes, and takes off his sheepskin coat*). Peace to this house! Are you well? Your health, auntie!

ANISYA. Your health, batyushka! Just from home?

AKIM. I thought, don't you know, you see, I'd come, you know, and see my son. I'd come to my son. I started rather late; after I'd eaten dinner, I started, don't you know; but you see the snow is rather heavy; heavy going, don't you see? So I'm late, you know. Is my son at home? is he at home?

ANISYA. No, he went to town.

AKIM (*sits on the bench*). I had a little business, you see, that is, just a little business with him. I told him, you see, a few days ago, yes, I told him about what I wanted; how my poor horse died, don't you know; died, my poor horse. And, you see, I must get one somehow;

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get a horse, don't you see, yes, some kind of a horse. And so, you see, I've come, you know.

ANISYA. Nikita told me. When he comes, you can talk it over. (*Goes to the oven.*) Have some supper: he'll be here soon. Mitritch, say, Mitritch come to supper!

MITRITCH. O Lord, Saint Nicholas the merciful!

ANISYA. Come to supper.

KUMA. I must be going, good-by! (*Exit.*)

SCENE V

AKIM, ANISYA, and MITRITCH

MITRITCH (*climbs down from the oven*). I didn't know when I went to sleep. O Lord! O Saint Mikola! . . . How are you, Uncle Akim!

AKIM. Eh! Mitritch! So it's you, is it? Oh, yes, of course⁴ . . .

MITRITCH. Yes, I live here as your son Nikita's man.

AKIM. You don't say. Oh, yes, of course, as my son's man! You don't say!

MITRITCH. I was living in town at a merchant's, but I took to drinking there. And so I came to the country. As I had no other place to go, I hired out here. (*Yawns.*) O Lord!

AKIM. But tell me, you don't say, Mikishka—why, what's he doing? You don't mean to say that he has so much to do that he needs to hire, that is to say, has to hire a man?

ANISYA. What has he to do? He was getting along all right; but now something's wrong in his mind, and so he hired a man.

MITRITCH. He has money enough, so why not?

AKIM. But don't you know it's wrong; I tell you, it's wrong. It's all wrong. It's wasteful, don't you know!

⁴ Akim's limited vocabulary fills in the gaps of fluency with his frequently repeated *znatchit, tayó*.

ANISYA. Yes, it's wasteful, very wasteful. It's a shame!

AKIM. That's the way, don't you know; a man tries to better himself, and, you see, he comes out worse. Riches spoil a man, yes, spoil a man.

MITRITCH. A dog goes mad from too much fat and a man is apt to go mad from fat living. See how I got spoiled with too fat living! For three weeks I was drunk all the time. I drank up my last pair of drawers. When I had nothing left, I gave it up. Now, I've sworn off. Good-by to it.⁵

AKIM. But where is she, you know, your old woman? . . .

MITRITCH. My old woman's found her right place. She's in town; stopping round at drinking-places. She's a beauty! One eye torn out, the other bunged up, and her snout knocked round to one side. When she's sober she manages to get her mouth full of barley pirogs—but she never is!

AKIM. O-o! What do you mean?

MITRITCH. Where else is the place for a soldier's wife? She's attending to her own business. (*Silence.*)

AKIM (*to ANISYA*). What took Nikita to town; say, did he carry a load? He had something to sell, did he, and took it, did he?

ANISYA (*lays the table and serves the food*). He went without any load. He went after money . . . to take it out of bank.

AKIM (*sits down to supper*). What do you want to do with it—with the money, I mean, yes, the money?

ANISYA. No, we don't touch it. Only twenty or thirty rubles; we spent some, so we had to draw some out.

AKIM. Had to draw some out? Why do you take it—that is, take money, don't you know? To-day, don't you know, you take some; to-morrow, don't you know, you take some—and so you use it all up, don't you know!

ANISYA. This is extra. The money isn't touched at all.

AKIM. Isn't touched? How do you mean "isn't touched"? You take it out, and still it isn't touched?

⁵ *Nu yeyo*; literally, now her.

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Now suppose you put flour, don't you know, yes, flour, in a closet or, don't you know, in a pantry, and then you keep taking out from it, don't you know, will it be untouched? Of course it won't be; it's all a delusion, don't you know? You just try it; it's all a delusion, don't you know? How can it be untouched? You draw it out and still it's there?

ANISYA. Well, I don't know anything about it. Ivan Moseitch advised us about it. "Put the money in the bank," says he, "and the money'll be safe, and you'll get a percentage on it."

MITRITCH (*has finished eating*). That's so. I lived at a merchant's. They did that way. Deposit your money and lie on the oven, and it keeps coming in.

AKIM. What you say is wonderful, don't you know! How is it? You get it, you see, you get it—that is the money, don't you know, but who is it you get it of—the money, I mean.

ANISYA. They give it to you at the bank.

MITRITCH. What are you talking about? You're a woman, you can't explain it. Now, look here, I'll just make it all plain for you. Just pay attention. Suppose, for example, you have some money, and suppose spring has come and the ground is ready for sowing, or you have taxes to pay. Now, suppose I come to you. "Akim," I say, "let me have a ten ruble note, and when I've harvested my field, next Intercession, I'll give you back your ten rubles, and I'll harvest your field in return for the favor." And then suppose, for example, you see I have something as security: a little horse or a little cow, and you say, "Give me two or three rubles for the favor, that's all." I'm in a bad fix, and I can't get out of it. "All right," I say, "I will take the ten rubles." In the autumn I make settlement, I carry it back to him, and you get three rubles out of me to boot.

AKIM. But, you see, don't you know, only crooked peasants do that way; of course, don't you know, if any one forgets God, why then, of course, don't you know, they do wrong.

MITRITCH. You just wait! Now, you remember, of course, how you did,—how you plundered me,—and

suppose Anisya has some money laid up, for example. She doesn't know what to do with it. Of course it isn't a woman's business, and so she has nowhere to put it. And she comes to you and asks you if you can't make some use of her money for her. "Why, of course I can," you say, if she'll only wait. Well then, the next summer, I come again: "Let me have another little red note, and I'll return it with due respect." . . . Well, you think it over. If my skin hasn't been turned once too often, if I can still be plucked, then you give me Anisya's money. But if, for example, I have nothing left, and nothing to eat, then of course you know there's nothing to be got out of me, and you say, "Pack yourself off, brother, and God be with you," and you try to find some one else, and you give your money and Anisya's, and so you pluck that one. That's what a bank does. It keeps going round in a circle. It is a clever trick, brother.

AKIM (*growing indignant*). What is that you say? Of course, that's downright rascality, don't you know! Why! Muzhiks who do that sort of thing, don't you know, consider it a sin, don't you know! Why! It is contrary to the law, don't you know, contrary to the law. It's downright rascality. But how educated folks, don't you know, can . . .

MITRITCH. Why, brother, that's what they like to do better than anything else. Just mark my word, any one who's rather stupid, or a woman, for instance, who can't use their money in business, why, they take it to bank, and, as it were, barley pirogs fall into their mouths all cooked with that money; but it cheats the people. It's a clever trick.

AKIM (*sighing*). Ekh! I see how it is! Why, don't you know, when you haven't any money, it's woe and tribulation; but when you have, it's twice as bad, don't you know? Anyhow, God commanded us to work. But, don't you see, you put your money in the bank and go to sleep, and expect it to feed you, don't you know. Why! it's rascally business, don't you know, and contrary to the law!

MITRITCH. Contrary to law? Folks don't mind that

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these days! They cheat you out of your eye-teeth. But that's all business.

AKIM (*sighs*). Well, well, what times we've come to! There I saw the water-closets, don't you know, the kind they have in town. Polished, polished, don't you know! made like a tavern. But what's the use of it? It's no use! Okh! they've forgotten God. Why, of course they have. Yes, we've forgotten God, forgotten him! Thanks, daughter, had enough, I'm all full! (*Comes round from behind the table. MITRITCH climbs up on the oven.*)

ANISYA (*clears away the dishes, and eats*). If his father would only warn him, but I'm 'shamed to speak.

AKIM. What?

ANISYA. No matter, I was talking to myself.

SCENE VI

The Same, and ANYUTKA

(ANYUTKA *enters*)

AKIM. Ah, clever girl! you're always busy! You're frozen, I guess!

ANYUTKA. Oh, I'm awful cold! How are you, grandpa?

ANISYA. Tell me, was he there?

ANYUTKA. No! but Andryan was just over from town, and said he saw them in town, at a tavern. "Your pa," says he, "was drunk; very drunk."

ANISYA. Do you want something to eat? Here's something for you.

ANYUTKA (*goes to the stove*).. Oh, I'm cold. My hands are just stiff. (AKIM *undoes his leg-wrappers*; ANISYA *washes the dishes.*)

ANISYA. Batyushka.

AKIM. What do you say?

ANISYA. Is it true Marishka is well settled?

AKIM. Pretty well. She's getting along. Why you see, she's a sensible, quiet woman, you know; she tries

hard. Of course she's a good woman, and she's painstaking, you know, and she's not topping; she's a woman as is a woman.⁶

ANISYA. Well, they say some one from your village—a relation of Marinka's husband—wants to marry our Akulina. Tell me, have you heard anything about it?

AKIM. Can it be the Mironofs. The women have been gossiping about it. Of course, I've not paid any attention to it. I don't know anything at all about it, you see. The old women have talked about it more or less. But you see I don't remember, I don't remember. But the Mironofs are good peasants, well-to-do, you know.

ANISYA. Well, I don't believe it; but the sooner she gets married off the better.

AKIM. Why so?

ANYUTKA (*listens*). Here they come.

ANISYA. Well, don't mind them! (*Continues to wash the spoons without turning her head.*)

SCENE VII

The Same, and NIKITA

NIKITA. Anisya, wife—who's come? (ANISYA *glances at him and turns away without answering.*) Who's come, I say. Have you lost your tongue? (*Angrily.*)

ANISYA. Trying to show off? Come in.

NIKITA (*still more threateningly*). Who has come?

ANISYA (*approaches and takes him by the arm*). Well, my husband has come. Come into the izba.

NIKITA (*resists*). All right! It's your husband, but how do you receive your husband? Speak properly!

ANISYA. Deuce take you! Nikita!

NIKITA. So far so good! Boor! Why don't you give the whole name?

* *Zabotchka, znatchit, nitchavo znatchit*; literally, little woman (it also means butterfly), of course, nothing, of course. *Nitchavo* is for *nitchevo*, genitive of *nichto*, nothing; a word of extraordinary significance in a Russia mouth. Any translation of Akim's disconnected repetitions must necessarily be largely guesswork.—Tr.

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ANISYA. Akimuitch! There!

NIKITA (*still in the doorway*). So far so good! Now the family name.

ANISYA (*laughs and pulls him by the arm*). Chilikin! There! What airs!

NIKITA. That's all right! (*Clutches the door-post*.) No! tell me which leg Chilikin puts out first when he goes into the izba.

ANISYA. Now, stop your nonsense; you let the cold in.

NIKITA. Speak, which leg first? You've got to tell me!

ANISYA (*to herself*). He's a nuisance now. Well, the left leg. Now come in, will you!

NIKITA. All right.

ANISYA. You look and see who's inside.

NIKITA. My father! Well, I don' d'spize my father. I can pay him my respects. How's your health, father?⁷ (*Bows before him and gives him his hand*.)

Our respects to you!

AKIM (*not replying to him*). Liquor, oh, liquor; what harm it does! It's scandalous!

NIKITA. Liquor? What have I drunk? That's just the trouble! I drank with a friend—drank to his health.

ANISYA. Go in and lie down, will you?

NIKITA. Wife, tell me where am I, anyway?

ANISYA. It's all right, go and lie down.

NIKITA. Wait till I have a drink with my father. Start the samovar. Akulina, come here, I say!

SCENE VIII

The Same, and AKULINA

AKULINA (*in gala dress, enters with her purchases; to NIKITA*). What made you mix everything up? Where's my yarn?

NIKITA. Yarn? Your yarn's there. Hey! Mitritch! Where are you? Are you asleep? Go and put up the horse!

⁷ *Batyushka*.

AKIM (*does not see AKULINA, but looks at his son*). What is he doing? The old man is dead tired, don't you know, he's been threshing; but *he* is drunk. "Put up the horse," indeed. Tfu! vileness!

MITRITCH (*climbs down from the oven and puts on his felt boots*). O merciful Lord! Is the horse in the yard? Dead tired, I've no doubt! Ish! The devil take him! How full he is! Chock full! O Lord! Saint Nicholas! (*Puts on his shuba, and goes to the yard.*)

NIKITA (*sits down*). Forgive me, father, I'm drunk, that's a fact; but what's to be done about it? Even a hen will drink! Won't she? But forgive me. As for Mitritch, he won't care; he'll put up the horse.

ANISYA. Truly; shall I start the samovar?

NIKITA. Yes; father's come, and I want to talk with him, and drink a little tea. (*To AKULINA.*) Have you brought in all the purchases?

AKULINA. The purchases? I brought in mine, but the other things are in the sledge. Oh, here's something which don't belong to me. (*Throws a bundle on the table and stores away her own things in a trunk.*)

ANYUTKA *watches AKULINA putting her things away*; AKIM *does not look at his son, but arranges his leg-wrappers and bark shoes on the oven.*)

ANISYA (*goes out with the samovar*). There, her trunk is full—and yet he has bought more!

SCENE IX

AKIM, AKULINA, ANYUTKA, and NIKITA

NIKITA (*assumes a sober air*). Now, father, don't be vexed! Do you think I'm drunk? Really, I can attend to anything; tho' I drink, I don't lose my wits. I can talk with you any time, father. I remember everything: you sent a message about money; your little horse died—I remember. That's all right. That's in our power. That's in our hands. If you needed a big sum of money, then we might have to postpone it a little; but this I can do for you. Here it is.

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AKIM (*continues to occupy himself with his foot-gear*). Ekh! my poor lad, a spring road, don't you know, it's no highway. . . .

NIKITA. What do you mean by that? Talk with a drunken man is no conversation. But don't you worry. Let us have a little tea. I'm all right; really I can attend to everything.

AKIM (*shakes his head*). Eh! Ekh-khe-khe!

NIKITA. Money—here's some. (*Feels in his kaftan, takes out his pocket-book, unrolls some bills, selects a ten-ruble note.*) Take it for the horse. Take it for the horse. I can't forget my father. Really, I won't go back on you—because you're my father. Here, take it. It's very simple, I don't grudge it. (*Goes to AKIM and offers him the money, but AKIM refuses to take it. NIKITA thrusts it into his hand.*) Take it! I give it and don't grudge it.

AKIM. Why, I can't take it, don't you know, and I can't talk with you, don't you know, because, don't you see, you're not in a fit condition. . . .

NIKITA. I won't take "No." Take it! (*Thrusts the money into AKIM's hand.*)

SCENE X

The Same, and ANISYA

ANISYA (*enters and pauses*). Yes, you'd better take it. You see he won't give in.

AKIM (*takes it, shaking his head*). Ekh! Liquor! A man's not a man, don't you know. . . .

NIKITA. There, that's better. You can return it or not, just as you please. God be with you! That's the way I'm made. (*Sees AKULINA.*) Akulina, show your presents.

AKULINA. What?

NIKITA. Show your presents.

AKULINA. My presents? Why should I show them? I have put them away.

NIKITA. Get them out, I tell you; Anyutka will like

to see them. Show them to Anyutka, I say. Undo the shawl. Give it here!

AKIM. O-okh! it's a wretched sight. (*Climbs up on the oven.*)

AKULINA (*takes out her things and lays them on the table*). There, now; what do they want to look at them for?

ANYUTKA. Oh, that's pretty! It's as nice as Stepanida's!

AKULINA. Stepanida's? Stepanida's does not compare with it! (*Becoming animated and spreading out the shawl.*) Just look here! That cost something—it's French.

ANYUTKA. And that chintz is just fine! Mashutka has some like it, only hers is brighter on a light blue background. This is awfully pretty.

NIKITA. That's so! (*ANISYA goes angrily to the closet and returns with the chimney and stand, and approaches the table.*)

ANISYA. There you are, spreading out all that stuff!

NIKITA. Just come and look at it!

ANISYA. Why should I look at it? Haven't I seen things? Put them away! (*Pushes the shawl off on the floor.*)

AKULINA. What are you knocking my things about for? Knock your own things. (*Picks them up.*)

NIKITA. Anisya! Look!

ANISYA. Why should I look?

NIKITA. Do you think I forgot you? Look here! (*Shows a bundle and sits on it.*) It's a present for you. Only deserve it! Wife, what am I sitting on?

ANISYA. You can swell round if you want to. I'm not afraid of you. But I should like to know whose money you are squandering? buying presents for your fatty!

AKULINA. Your money? How's that? You tried to steal it, but you didn't succeed. Go away! (*Tries to pass, and pushes ANISYA.*)

ANISYA. What are you pushing me for? I'll slap you.

AKULINA. Slap me? All right, strike! (*Approaches her.*)

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NIKITA. There, women, women! Stop it! (*Stands between them.*)

AKULINA. She has to meddle. You had better hold your tongue. Perhaps you think folks don't know.

ANISYA. What do folks know? Speak, speak! What do folks know?

AKULINA. I know a fine work of yours!

ANISYA. You slut! You live with another woman's husband.

AKULINA. Well, you poisoned yours.

ANISYA (*flings herself on AKULINA*). You lie!

NIKITA (*holds her*). Anisya! Do you forget?

ANISYA. You threaten me, do you? I'm not afraid of you!

NIKITA. Out of here! (*Turns ANISYA round and pushes her out.*)

ANISYA. Where should I go? I won't go out of my own house!

NIKITA. Out of here, I say! Don't you dare come in!

ANISYA. I won't go! (*NIKITA pushes her, ANISYA weeps and shrieks, clinging to the door.*) Why should I be pushed out of my own house? What are you doing, you villain? Do you think there's no justice for you? Just you wait!

NIKITA. There! there!

ANISYA. I'll go to the elder, to the policeman.⁸

NIKITA. Away, I tell you! (*Keeps pushing her.*)

ANISYA (*outside the door*). I will hang myself.

SCENE XI

NIKITA, AKULINA, ANYUTKA, and AKIM

NIKITA. Never mind!

ANYUTKA. O-o-o! my dear mother, my own mother!

NIKITA. There, I'm not scared of her! Not much! What are you crying for? She'll come back, never you fear! Go, look after the samovar. (*Exit ANYUTKA.*)

⁸ *Uryadnik*, village policeman.

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SCENE XII

NIKITA, AKIM, and AKULINA

AKULINA (*collects her purchases and puts them away*). Look at that, the wretch, how she messed it! Just you wait; I'll tear her cloak⁹ for her. Truly, I will!

NIKITA. I've turned her out; what more do you want?

AKULINA. She soiled my new shawl? Indeed, if the bitch had not gone out, I'd have torn her eyes out!

NIKITA. Don't be mad. Why should you be mad? As if I loved her!

AKULINA. Loved her! Is that thick-mouth any one to love? If you'd only turned her off *then*, there wouldn't have been any trouble. You ought to have sent her to the devil! But the house is mine, all the same, and the money, too. "I am the mistress," says she. Mistress!¹⁰ What kind of a wife¹⁰ was she to her husband! She is a murderess, that's what she is. She'll do the same to you.

NIKITA. Okh! You can't stop a woman's tongue! You don't know what you are talking about!

AKULINA. Yes, I do know, too! I will not live with her. I'll drive her out of the house. She and I can't stay under one roof. I am the mistress of this place. She isn't the mistress—she's a jail-bird!

NIKITA. There now, shut up! What can you do with her? Don't look to her. Look to me. I'm the master here. I will do what I please. I don't love her any more and I do love you. I'll love any one I please. That's my right. *There's where she is as far as I'm concerned!* (*Points to the ground.*) Ekh! No harmonica here!

*The cakes are on the stove,
The kasha on the stair,
And we will try to live
And have an easy time,
But death will surely come,
And we shall be at peace.*

*The cakes are on the stove,
The kasha on the stair.*

⁹ *Bezrukavka*, from *bez*, without, and *rukaf*, a sleeve: a sleeveless garment.

¹⁰ *Khozyaika* in both cases.

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SCENE XIII

The Same, and MITRITCH

MITRITCH (*enters, takes off his coat, and climbs on the stove*). So it seems the women have been quarreling again; fighting! O Lord! Blessed Mikola!

AKIM (*sits on the edge of the stove, gets his leg-wrappers and bark shoes, and begins to put them on*). Get in, get into the corner there.

MITRITCH (*creeps up*). Evidently they haven't got things settled yet. O Lord!

NIKITA. Get out the liquor; we'll have some with the tea.

SCENE XIV

The Same, and ANYUTKA

ANYUTKA (*Enters: to AKULINA*). Sister,¹¹ the samovar is all ready to come in.

NIKITA. Where is your mother?

ANYUTKA. She is in the entry, crying.

NIKITA. All right, call her in; tell her to bring the samovar. And, Akulina, you put on the glasses.

AKULINA. The glasses? Very well! (*She gets the glasses.*)

NIKITA (*gets out the liquor, biscuits, and herring*). This, of course, is for myself; the yarn for the woman; the kerosene is out there in the entry. And here's the money. Wait! (*Takes the abacus.*) I shall soon find out. (*Reckons.*) Wheat flour, eighty kopeks; oil . . . ten rubles to father. Father, come and drink some tea! (*Silence. AKIM sits on the stove and winds his leg-wrappers around him.*)

¹¹ Nyanka, diminutive of *nyanya*, nurse.

SCENE XV

The Same, and ANISYA

ANISYA (*bringing in the samovar*). Where shall I put it?

NIKITA. Put it on the table. Tell me, did you go to the Starosta? It's all right. Speak, and bite it off! Now stop being mad! Sit down and have a drink. (*Pours her out a glass of liquor.*) Here's a little present for you. (*Hands her the package on which he had been sitting. ANISYA takes it silently, shaking her head.*)

AKIM (*gets down and puts on his shuba. He approaches the table and lays the bank note on it*). Here, this is your money. Take it.

NIKITA (*does not see the money*). Where are you hurrying off to with your things on?

AKIM. Well, I am going, yes, I am going, don't you know; forgive me, for Christ's sake. (*Takes his cap and belt.*)

NIKITA. What a pity! Where are you going at this time of night?

AKIM. I can't stay, don't you know; no, I can't stay, that is, in your house, I can't stay. Forgive me.

NIKITA. But where are you going when tea is on?

AKIM (*buckles his belt*). I am going, don't you see, because, you know, it's all wrong; yes, all wrong, Mikishka, at your house, all wrong, you know. You see, you are living a wicked life, Mikishka, a wicked life. I'm going.

NIKITA. There, now, stop your nonsense; sit down and drink some tea.

ANISYA. What do you mean, batyushka? Why, it'll shame us before folks. What have you taken offense at?

AKIM. No offense at all, don't you know, no offense. Of course not; only I see my son is going to ruin, yes, to ruin, don't you know; my son going to ruin; my son, to ruin.

NIKITA. Ruin? What ruin? Just tell us.

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AKIM. Ruin, yes, to ruin; ruin all around you. What did I tell you that time?

NIKITA. Yes, you told a little something.

AKIM. I told you, you know, about the orphan girl you wronged, the orphan girl. I mean you wronged Marina.

NIKITA. Ek! You've a great memory for old, stale tattle; the thing is past.

AKIM (*growing hot*). Past? Nay, my son, 'tis not past. One sin, don't you know, hooks on to another, and brings a whole train of them; and you are stuck in sin, Mikishka. I see how it is; you're stuck in sin, don't you know. Stuck, sunk in deep, don't you know!

NIKITA. Sit down and have some tea, and we'll talk it all over.

AKIM. I can't drink your tea, don't you know. For I feel terrible, don't you know, terrible over your wicked ways, and so you see, I can't, no, I can't drink tea with you.

NIKITA. What a fuss you make! Come to the table!

AKIM. Your riches are like a net, don't you know, a net to you. Ah, Mikishka! your soul is in need!

NIKITA. What right have you to come to my house and reproach me? And why do you insist so on it? Am I a child to let you pull my hair? All that sort of thing is done away with nowadays.

AKIM. That's so. I have heard that nowadays they pull the fathers' beards, you know; but you see it leads to ruin, yes, it leads to ruin.

NIKITA (*angrily*). We live; we ask no favors of you, and here you come to us with your wants.

AKIM. Money? There is your money. I will sooner beg, don't you know; but I wouldn't take this, of course I wouldn't.

NIKITA. Now hush up! And what are you vexed about? What are you spoiling our party for? (*Holds him by the arm.*)

AKIM (*screams*). Let me go! I won't stay, I'd rather sleep under the fence than in your vile company. Tfu! God forgive!

(*Exit.*)

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SCENE XVI

NIKITA, AKULINA, ANISYA, *and* MITRITCH

NIKITA. Look at that!

SCENE XVII

The Same, and AKIM

AKIM (*opens the door*). Come to yourself, Mikita. Your soul is in danger! (*Exit.*)

SCENE XVIII

NIKITA, AKULINA, ANISYA, *and* MITRITCH

AKULINA (*brings the cups*). Tell me, shall I pour? (*All are silent.*)

MITRITCH (*bellows*). O Lord, have mercy on me a sinner! (*All shudder.*)

NIKITA (*lies down on the bench*). Oh, what a bore, what a bore! Akulina, where is the harmonica?

AKULINA. The harmonica? Don't you remember? You took it to be mended. I have poured the tea; drink it.

NIKITA. I don't want any. Put out the light. . . . Oh, what a bore! what a bore for me! (*Weeps.*)

Curtain

ACT IV

Autumn. Evening. The moon shines. Interior of the courtyard. In the middle of the stage, at the right, the winter izba and the gates; at the left, the summer izba and cellar. In the izba are heard loud talk and drunken shouts. The NEIGHBOR comes forth from the entry, and beckons to ANISYA's godmother—the KUMA.

SCENE I

KUMA and NEIGHBOR

NEIGHBOR. Why hasn't Akulina come out?

KUMA. Why hasn't she come? She'd be glad enough to come, but they say she can't. The matchmakers are here to inspect the bride, but, my dear mother,¹ she is lying in the summer room, and doesn't show her face, my dear.

NEIGHBOR. What does that mean?

KUMA. The evil eye, they say she has the gripes!

NEIGHBOR. You don't say!

KUMA. Well, it's this way. (*Whispers in her ear.*)

NEIGHBOR. Really? Well that's a sin. Why, the matchmakers will find out about it.

KUMA. How will they find out? They're all drunk. Besides, what they're after chiefly is the dowry. It's a good one: why, my dear mother, they give, with the girl, two shubas, six dresses, a French shawl, a whole lot of linen, and in money, they say, two hundred rubles.

NEIGHBOR. Well, even that money won't make them glad. What a disgrace!

¹ *Matushka moya*, little mother mine. The speakers are two women introduced as *sosyedka*, neighbor, and *kuma*, gossip or god-mother, as in Acts II and III.—TR.

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KUMA. Sh! Here's the matchmaker!² (*They stop talking and go into the entry.*)

SCENE II

MATCHMAKER (*comes out alone from the entry; hiccoughs*). I'm all of a sweat. It was horribly hot! I must get cooled off a little. (*Stands and draws a long breath.*) And God knows how it is. . . . There's something about this that doesn't please me. . . . Well, it's as the old woman . . .

SCENE III

MATCHMAKER and MATRIONA

MATRIONA (*comes out from the same entry*). Here, I am looking: where's the matchmaker? Where's the matchmaker? Ah, here you are, friend; I've been looking for you. . . . Well, good father, glory be to God, everything has gone off honorably. It is not the time to boast. Besides, I was taught never to boast. But as in this case you've made a good bargain, God grant you may be everlastingly grateful to me. And the bride, I tell you, is a rarity. You wouldn't find such another girl in the whole district.

MATCHMAKER. It seems all right; but as regards the money, we must look out.

MATRIONA. Don't speak about the money. What she received from her parents is all hers. In these days a hundred and fifty rubles is not easily got, is it—

MATCHMAKER. We don't find any fault, but we all want to do the best we can for our children.

MATRIONA. I will tell you one thing that's true: if it hadn't been for me, you never would have found such a one in your whole life. An offer came to them from the Kormilin's, but I opposed it. And as far as the money is concerned, I tell you honestly, when her late father died—his be the kingdom of heaven—he left

² *Svat*. The matchmaker arranges for the marriage settlement. In the present case the *svat* is the father of the groom; he is accompanied by his *starukha*, or old woman.—Tr.

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orders that the widow should take Nikita into the house; and this I know because my son told me all about it; but the money went to Akulina. Any other man would have looked out for himself, but Nikita gave it all to her most honorably. It's not an easy thing to get so much cash.

MATCHMAKER. People say more money than that was promised with her; your son is also pretty sharp.

MATRIONA. Oh, the white doves! In others' hands the slice is great. They give all they got. I tell you, don't you worry about the money. You'd better have it securely settled. What a girl she is, good as ripe seed!

MATCHMAKER. That is so. But the wife and I are wondering about the girl; why doesn't she appear? We think she may be sickly.

MATRIONA. I-i! She sickly? There's no one around here so sound! The girl's like steel! You can't pinch her. Why, you saw her the other day. She's a terror at working. She's a bit deaf, that's a fact. But a worm-hole doesn't spoil a red apple. But you see why she doesn't come out: it's the evil eye; there's a spell on her. And I know what bitch cast it. You see they knew about the betrothal and tried to stop it. But I know of a counter-spell. To-morrow the girl will be all right. Don't you worry about the girl.

MATCHMAKER. Well, then, the matter is decided.

MATRIONA. All right, and don't you back out. And don't you forget me. I also have worked hard for this. Don't go back on me. . . .

A WOMAN'S VOICE (*in the entry*). Come, Ivan, it's time to go, isn't it?

MATCHMAKER. All right. (*Exit. There is a crowding into the entry and people departing.*)

SCENE IV

ANISYA and ANYUTKA

ANYUTKA (*runs out of the entry and beckons to ANISYA*). Mamushka!

ANISYA (*from the entry*). What is it?

ANYUTKA. Mamushka, come quick, or they'll hear! (*Goes with her toward the shed.*)

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ANISYA. Tell me, what is it? Where is Akulina?

ANYUTKA. She went into the storehouse. And what she is doing there is awful! As true as I live, she says, "I can't endure my sufferings. I shall scream at the top of my voice," she says. As true as I live!

ANISYA. Perhaps she'll wait a little. Let us get rid of the guests.

ANYUTKA. Okh! Mamushka! How hard it is for her! And she scolds, too! "It's no use their drinking my health!" says she, "I shan't marry," says she, "I shall die," says she. Oh, mamushka! Supposing she should die! It's awful! I'm afraid!

ANISYA. Never fear, she won't die! but don't you go to her. Go away! (*Exeunt ANISYA and ANYUTKA.*)

SCENE V

MITRITCH (*alone. Approaches from the gates and carefully picks up the scattered hay*). O Lord! Mikola the merciful! How they did blow in the liquor! And how they smelt of it! The whole place stinks! No, I don't like it, can't abide it! And see how they scattered the hay. They didn't eat it, simply wasted it. Would you look at the bundle of it! What a smell! Right under one's nose! The deuce take it. (*Yawns.*) It's bedtime! But I don't want to go in! How it fills my nose! What a cursed smell! (*Sounds of departure are heard.*) Well, they've gone! O Lord, Mikola the merciful! They throw dust in each other's eyes. But it's all nonsense!

SCENE VI

MITRITCH and NIKITA

NIKITA (*enters*). Mitritch! Go to your place on the stove; I will fasten up.

MITRITCH. All right, give this to the sheep. So you've seen them off, have you?

NIKITA. Yes, but it's not all right. I don't know what'll come of it.

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MITRITCH. What rot! In such a case there's the foundling hospital. Whoever drops one there, they take 'em all. Give as much as you please; they ask no questions. Sometimes they even pay money; they like to get wet nurses. It's very simple these days.

NIKITA. Now be careful, Mitritch; if anything happens don't you chatter about it.

MITRITCH. As far as I'm concerned, cover your traces as best you can. Eka! how you smell of liquor! I'll go indoors! (*Exit, yawning.*) O Lord!

SCENE VII

NIKITA (*stands silent a long time; then seats himself on a sledge*). Well, here's trouble!

SCENE VIII

NIKITA and ANISYA

ANISYA (*enters*). Where are you?

NIKITA. Here!

ANISYA. What are you sitting here for? It's no time to be dallying! *It* must be got rid of immediately.

NIKITA. What are we to do?

ANISYA. I will tell you what. You do it.

NIKITA. I suppose you'd take it to the Foundling Hospital.

ANISYA. Take it and carry it wherever you please. You're very clever at getting into mischief, but weak enough at getting out of it, I see.

NIKITA. What is to be done?

ANISYA. I say go into the cellar and dig a hole.

NIKITA. But you find some other way.

ANISYA (*mocking him*). Some other way! It's impossible. You ought to have thought of this before. Go where you're sent.

NIKITA. Akh! trouble! trouble!

SCENE IX

The Same, and ANYUTKA

ANYUTKA. Mamushka! Granny's calling. Sister's surely got a baby! It's squalling, as true as I'm alive!

ANISYA. What are you gabbling about; plague take you! It's some cats yowling there. Go into the izba and go to bed, or I'll give it to you.

ANYUTKA. But, my dear mamushka, I'm right, as true as there's a God. . . .

ANISYA (*threatens her*). I'll give it to you. Don't let me hear a sound from you! (ANYUTKA *runs out*. Addressing NIKITA.) Go, do what I told you, or else look out!
(*Exit.*)

SCENE X

NIKITA (*alone; is silent a long time*). Now this is trouble! Oh, these women! It's a shame! "You ought to have thought of this before," said she. When could I have thought of it? When could I? Why it was only last summer Anisya here began to follow me. Well, what of it? Am I a monk? The master died and I atoned for the sin as I was in duty bound. It wasn't my fault. Aren't there lots of such cases? And then those powders. Did I suggest her doing such a thing? If I had known about it then I'd have killed her on the spot—the bitch! Truly I'd have killed her! She's made me a partner in these vile doings—the wretch! She grew disgusting to me from that moment! As soon as mother told me—then she grew disgusting, she grew disgusting to me; my eyes wouldn't look at her! How can I live with her? And so this came about! . . . This girl began to hang about me. What was it to me? If I hadn't done it, some one else would. And now this has come! And this wasn't my fault either. Okh! what troubles! . . . (*Sits down and ponders.*) Well, those women are bold! . . . what have they concocted now? I certainly won't meddle with it!

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SCENE XI

NIKITA and MATRIONA

MATRIONA (*enters in haste, with lantern and a spade*). What are you sitting there for, like a hen on a roost? Didn't your wife tell you to do something? It's all ready.

NIKITA. What are you going to do?

MATRIONA. Well we know what to do; you attend to your part.

NIKITA. You are trying to involve me.

MATRIONA. What are you talking about? Do you expect to get out of it? You go so far, and try to crawl out!

NIKITA. But you see this is such a crime! Why, it's a living soul!

MATRIONA. A living soul, is it? Why, there's scarcely any life in it! And what could you do with it, anyway? If you went and took it to the Foundling Hospital, it would die just the same. And the betrothal would stop, and every one would know about it, and the girl would be left on our hands!

NIKITA. But supposing it should be known?

MATRIONA. In one's own house one can do things. We can do it so that it won't smell. Only do what I bid you. This is not a woman's work; we can't get along without a man. Here, take the spade and crawl down under there and make the place ready. I'll hold the light.

NIKITA. Make what place ready?

MATRIONA (*in a whisper*). Dig a hole. Then we'll bring it and put it in lively. There she is calling again. Go and see. I will come.

NIKITA. But tell me, is it dead?

MATRIONA. Certainly it's dead. Only you must make haste. The people haven't gone to bed yet. They have their ears and their eyes open; they have to know everything, the dogs! And the Uryadnik was here this evening. So here's for you! (*Gives him the spade.*) Get down into the cellar. Dig a hole in one corner; the soil is soft there; then you can smooth it over again. Mother Earth³ won't tell any one how the cow licks with her tongue. Go on; go, my dear!

³ *Zemlya-Matushka.*

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NIKITA. You are trying to involve me! Hang you! Truly, I am going off. Do what you please by yourselves.

SCENE XII

The Same, and ANISYA

ANISYA (*outside the door*). Well, has he dug it yet?

MATRIONA. Why did you come away? Where is it?

ANISYA. I covered it with a sacking. It won't be heard. Say, has he dug it?

MATRIONA. He won't do it.

ANISYA (*flies into a passion*). Won't do it! Do you want to feed the vermin in prison? . . . I'll go this minute and tell the whole thing to the Uryadnik! It'll be all the same. I'll tell him this minute.

NIKITA (*panic-struck*). What will you tell?

ANISYA. What? I'll tell the whole story! Who took the money? You did! (*NIKITA is silent.*) And who gave him the poison? I gave it. But you knew it, you knew it, you knew it! I was in league with you.

MATRIONA. There, that'll do. Mikishka, why are you so obstinate? Now, what is to be done? You must help! Go on, little berry!

ANISYA. Would you mind! What a chicken-liver! Won't do it! You've abused me long enough, now end it! You've run over me long enough, now it's my turn. Go on, I say, or else I'll do something! . . . Na! there's the spade? Na, go on!

NIKITA. There now, why press me so? (*Takes the spade, but hesitates.*) I don't want to, I won't do it!

ANISYA. You won't do it? (*She begins to call.*) Help here! hey-y-y!

MATRIONA (*covers her mouth*). What are you doing? Are you out of your mind? He'll do it. . . . Go on, little son; go on, dear!

ANISYA. I will certainly summon the guard!

NIKITA. There now, hush! Ekh! what people! Be lively about it, will you! It's all the same. (*Goes to the cellar.*)

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MATRIONA. Yes, little berry, that's the way it goes. You may have a good time, but you must hide the consequences.

ANISYA (*still excited*). He's come it over me long enough, he and his mistress. It's got to stop! I won't be the only one; let him be a murderer, too. He'll know what it means!

MATRIONA. There, there, she's raging hot! Now, my dear little girl, don't be impatient; be calm; take it gently, that's the best way! Go back to the girl. He'll do the work. (*Follows NIKITA with the lantern. NIKITA crawls down into the cellar.*)

ANISYA. I'll make him smother his dirty cub! (*Still excited.*) I was the only one to be tormented about Piotr's bones. Let him learn what it is! I have no pity on myself—I tell you, I have no pity on myself.

NIKITA (*from the cellar*). Let us have some light!

MATRIONA (*holds down the light. To ANISYA*). He's digging; go bring it.

ANISYA. Watch him; if you don't, the scoundrel, he'll be sneaking off. I'll go and bring it.

MATRIONA. See here, don't you forget to christen it. Or else I'll do it. Have you a cross for it?⁴

ANISYA. I'll find one; I know where. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XIII

MATRIONA alone, and NIKITA in the cellar

MATRIONA. How sharp she spoke, that woman! There's no denying, she's been abused. Well, glory be to God, we'll soon have this matter settled, and no one will know anything about it.⁵ We'll get the girl off our hands without any trouble.⁶ Then my little son will be able to live in peace. The house, glory be to God, is well furnished, and they won't forget me, either. What would have be-

⁴In case of emergency a person, even though not a priest, may give valid baptism to a dying infant.

⁵Idiom: *Kontsui f vodu*; literally, the ends in the water.

⁶*Bez grekhan*; literally, without sin.

come of them if it hadn't been for Matriona? They wouldn't have had an idea what to do! (*Bending toward the cellar.*) Tell me, are you ready, my son?

NIKITA (*crawls out, just his head visible*). What, is it there? Bring it along! Why are you so slow about it? If it's got to be done, it's got to be done!

SCENE XIV

The Same, and ANISYA

(MATRIONA enters the entry and meets ANISYA. ANISYA comes out with the baby wrapped up in rags.)

MATRIONA. Well, did you christen it?

ANISYA. Certainly I did. I took it away by main force; she did not want to give it up. (*Approaches NIKITA, and hands him the baby.*)

NIKITA (*refuses to take it*). Carry it down yourself!

ANISYA. Take it, I say! (*Flings the child at him.*)

NIKITA (*catches it*). It's alive! Oh, mother, my own mother! It moves! It's alive! What shall I do with it? . . .

ANISYA (*snatches the baby out of his hands and flings it into the cellar*). Choke it quick and it won't be alive. (*Pushes NIKITA down cellar.*) It's your affair; finish it!

MATRIONA (*sits on the step*). He's tender-hearted. It's hard for him, poor fellow. Well, supposing he is? It's his fault.

(ANISYA stands near the cellar. MATRIONA sits on the doorstep, looks at her, and ponders.)

MATRIONA. I-i-i! How scared he was! Well, hard as it is, it can't be avoided. What could be done with it? Just think how other people pray for children; and then God doesn't grant them, or they're still-born. That's the

'*Matushka rodimaya*; literally, my own little mother; or perhaps like the Italian peasant exclamation, *Mamma mia!*—Tr.

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way it is with the priest's wife! . . . And here this one isn't wanted, and it's alive! (*Peers down into the cellar.*) It must be all over. (*To ANISYA.*) How is it?

ANISYA (*peering into the cellar*). He's covered it with a board; he's sitting on the board. It must be all over.

MATRIONA. O—okh! You'd be glad not to do the sin; but how could it be helped?

NIKITA (*crawls up all of a tremble*). It's still alive! I can't do it! It's alive!

ANISYA. Suppose it is alive? Where are you going? (*Tries to hold him.*)

NIKITA (*rushes at her*). Away with you, or I'll kill you! (*Seizes her by the arm; she tears herself away from him; he runs after her with his spade. MATRIONA rushes to intercept him, and stops him. ANISYA runs to the doorsteps. MATRIONA tries to take away the spade from him.*)

NIKITA (*to his mother.*) I'll kill you, too! Go away; I'll kill you! (*MATRIONA runs to ANISYA on the steps. NIKITA pauses.*) I'll kill you! I'll kill you all!

MATRIONA. This comes from his fright. It's nothing. He'll get over it.

NIKITA. Why have they done this? What have they made me do? How it wailed! . . . How it crunched under me! What have they made me do? . . . And it's still alive! truly it's alive! (*He is silent and listens.*) It's screaming! There, it's screaming! (*Runs back to the cellar.*)

MATRIONA (*to ANISYA*). There he goes; he's going to bury it, most likely. Nikita, don't you want the lantern?

NIKITA (*without replying, listens near the cellar*). I don't hear anything. It was my imagination. (*Walks a little farther, and pauses.*) How its little bones cracked under me! . . . Kr! . . . kr! . . . What have they made me do? (*He listens again.*) There it's crying again, surely it is! What does it mean? Matushka, oh, matushka! (*Goes toward her.*)

MATRIONA. What is it, little son?

NIKITA. Oh, mother, I cannot endure it any more. I cannot stand it! Mother dearest, pity me!

MATRIONA. Okh! you are just frightened, my dear

fellow. Go, go and get some brandy! Drink some, and it will brace you up.

NIKITA. Mother dear, it's hit me hard! What have you made me do? How those little bones cracked and how it screamed! Mother dear, what have you made me do? (*He goes away and sits on a sledge.*)

MATRIONA. Go, my dear, and get a drink. It is rather cruel to do such a thing at night. But after a while, when morning comes and you see the daylight, it will be a different thing. Just wait; we'll marry off the girl and we'll forget all about it. And now go and get a drink. I'll put everything to rights in the cellar.

NIKITA (*starts up*). Is there any liquor left? I might drink a little. (*Exit.*)

(ANISYA, who has been standing all the time at the entry, silently steps aside.)

SCENE XV

MATRIONA and ANISYA

MATRIONA. Go; go, little berry. I'll finish up the work. I'll go down my own self and fill up the hole. Where did he throw down the spade? (*She finds the spade and descends into cellar till she is only half seen.*) Anisya, come here; give me a little light!

ANISYA. Why doesn't he do it?

MATRIONA. He's half sick with terror. You see, you were very hard on him. Let him be! He'll come to himself. God help him! I'll do the work myself. Put the lantern here. I can see then. (*MATRIONA goes down into the cellar.*)

ANISYA (*at the door where NIKITA made his exit*). Well, have you had your good time out? You cut a wide swath.⁸ Now you'll know how it is yourself. You'll come off your high horse!

⁸ *Shirok tui buil*; literally, broad you were.

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SCENE XVI

The Same, and NIKITA

NIKITA (*hurries out of the entry toward the cellar*).
Matushka, say, matushka!

MATRIONA (*appearing at the entrance of the cellar*).
What do you want, little son?

NIKITA (*listens*). Don't bury it! Don't you hear?
It's alive! Hear it moan! . . . There! distinctly!

MATRIONA. How is it moaning? You crushed it as
flat as a pancake! You crushed its head all in!

NIKITA. What is that? (*Stops his ears.*) It still
moans! I have ruined my life—ruined it! What have
they made me do? . . . Where shall I go? . . . (*Sits on
the steps.*)

Curtain

VARIANT

In place of Scenes XIII., XIV., XV., and XVI., Act IV., the following Variant may be read.

Tableau

SCENE I

The Izba of Act I

(ANYUTKA, undressed, lies on the sleeping bench covered with a kaftan. MITRITCH sits on the bunk and smokes.)

MITRITCH. Oh, what a stench they've let loose. May pie and peas choke 'em. They must have spilt the fine stuff. Not even with tobacco can I stifle it! It gets into the nose so! O Lord! well, let's go to sleep. (*Goes to the lamp to put it out.*)

ANYUTKA (*startled, sits up*). Grandfather, don't put out the light, please!⁹

MITRITCH. Why not put it out?

ANYUTKA. What a noise they are making in the yard! (*Listens.*) Do you hear? they went into the barn again!

MITRITCH. What is that to you? They are not asking for you, are they? Lie down and go to sleep. I'll turn down the light. (*Turns it down.*)

ANYUTKA. Grandfather, darling! Don't put it quite out. Leave just enough for a mouse's little eye, else I shall feel timid.

MITRITCH (*laughs*). Well, all right, all right. (*Sits down near her.*) What are you timid about?

ANYUTKA. How can I help being, grandfather! How sister writhed. She beat her head against the box! (*In*

⁹ She calls him *dyedushka*, little grandfather, and *galubchik*, little dove; also, just below, *zolotoï*, golden one. Of course they are not related.

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a whisper.) You see, I know. . . . She was going to have a little baby born. . . . I'm sure it's born already. . . .

MITRITCH. Oh, what a crazy girl. Always on the jump! You have to know all that's going on. Lie down and go to sleep. (*ANYUTKA lies down.*) There, that's right. (*Covers her up.*) There that's right! If you know so much, you'll soon be growing old.

ANYUTKA. Are you going up on the stove?

MITRITCH. Where else should I go? . . . How stupid you are! You have to know all that's going on. (*Covers her up again and gets up to go.*) There now, lie down and go to sleep. (*Goes toward the stove.*)

ANYUTKA. It cried once, but now I don't hear it any more.

MITRITCH. O Lord, blessed Nicholas! . . . What is it you don't hear any more?

ANYUTKA. The baby.

MITRITCH. Since there isn't one, you most likely don't hear it.

ANYUTKA. But I did hear it; as true as I breathe, I heard it. Such a shrill little cry!

MITRITCH. You hear all sorts of things. And have you heard how the Letoseka takes little girls like you and puts them into his bag.

ANYUTKA. What is this Letoseka?

MITRITCH. Why, he is just what he is! (*Climbs on the stove.*) Ah! the stove feels warm to-day; it's good! Lovely! O Lord, blessed Nicholas!

ANYUTKA. Grandfather! are you going to sleep?

MITRITCH. What else do you suppose? shall I sing songs? (*Silence.*)

ANYUTKA. Grandfather, oh, grandfather! They are digging, really,¹⁰ they are digging. Don't you hear? As true as I'm alive, they're digging!

MITRITCH. What imagination you have! digging? digging at night! Who's digging? The cow is scratching herself, and you think—they are digging! Go to sleep, I say, or I'll put out the light this instant.

¹⁰ *Yeĩ Bogu*, By God.

ANYUTKA. Dearest grandfather! Don't put it out. I won't any more, honest I won't! It seems awful to me!

MITRITCH. Awful to you! Don't be afraid, and it won't seem awful to you. But they say they amount to pretty much the same thing. How can it help seeming awful when you're afraid? Oh, what a stupid little girl. (*Silence. A cricket.*)

ANYUTKA (*in a whisper*). Grandfather, oh, grandfather, are you asleep?

MITRITCH. What is it this time?

ANYUTKA. What kind of a thing is the Letoseka?

MITRITCH. This is the way of it. When he finds any little girl like you not asleep, he comes with his sack and chucks her into it, pops his head into it, lifts up her little shirt and switches her.

ANYUTKA. But what does he whip her with?

MITRITCH. He takes a broom.

ANYUTKA. But he can't see her in the sack, can he?

MITRITCH. Never you fear, he can!

ANYUTKA. But I'll bite him.

MITRITCH. No, my dear, you won't bite him!

ANYUTKA. Grandfather, some one is coming. Who is it? Ai! ye saints!¹¹ who is it?

MITRITCH. Suppose some one is coming! What's that to you? Your mother's coming, I guess.

SCENE II

The Same, and ANISYA

ANISYA (*enters*). Anyutka! (ANYUTKA *pretends to be asleep*.) Mitritch!

MITRITCH. What is it?

ANISYA. What are you burning a light for? We shall sleep in the summer izba.

MITRITCH. I've only just put things to rights. I'll put the light out.

¹¹ *Matushki rodimuiya*; literally, own mothers. In the sentence before, Mitritch calls the little girl *bratyets*, little brother.

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ANISYA (*searches in her chest and mutters to herself*).
When you want a thing you never can find it.

MITRITCH. What are you hunting for?

ANISYA. I'm hunting for a cross. It's got to be christened. God have mercy if it should die unchristened! It would be a sin.

MITRITCH. Why, of course everything must be done in due form. . . . Say, have you found it?

ANISYA. Yes, I've found it. (Exit.)

SCENE III

MITRITCH and ANYUTKA

MITRITCH. All right; if she hadn't I'd have given her mine. O Lord!

ANYUTKA (*starts up all of a tremble*). O-oh, grandfather! Don't go to sleep, for Christ's sake! How horrible it is!

MITRITCH. What is horrible?

ANYUTKA. It will die, I know it will—the poor little baby! Grandma christened Aunt Arina's baby and it died the same way.

MITRITCH. If it dies, they'll bury it.

ANYUTKA. Well, perhaps it wouldn't die, but grandma Matriona is there. You see, I heard what grandma said; as true as I'm alive, I heard.

MITRITCH. What did you hear? Go to sleep, I say. Cover your head up, that is all!

ANYUTKA. But if it lived I would be its nurse.

MITRITCH (*bellows*). O Lord!

ANYUTKA. Where will they put it?

MITRITCH. They'll put it where it's proper. It's not your funeral. Go to sleep, I say. Here, your mother'll be coming. She'll give it to you. (*Silence.*)

ANYUTKA. Grandfather! They didn't kill that little girl you told me about?

MITRITCH. Which one do you mean? Oh, that little girl grew up.

ANYUTKA. Grandfather, tell me; how did you say you found her?

MITRITCH. Yes, they found her.

ANYUTKA. But where did they find her? Tell me.

MITRITCH. We found her in some one's house. The soldiers came to a village and began to search the houses, and there that very same little girl was lying on her belly. They wanted to put an end to her. But then I felt sorry for her and I took her in my arms, but she didn't want to be taken. She made herself heavy as if a hundred pounds were in her, and she clung with her hands to everything that came in her way, and you could not make her let go. Well, I took her and patted her on the head, on the head. She bristled like a hedgehog! I smoothed her and smoothed her, and at last she calmed down. I soaked a biscuit and gave it to her. She understood that. She devoured it. But what was to be done with her? We took her. We took her and began to feed her and feed her, and she got used to us; we used to take her on our expeditions; wherever we went she went. She was a pretty little girl.

ANYUTKA. Well, wasn't she christened?

MITRITCH. Who knows? They used to say she wasn't properly christened. Because her people weren't of our kind.

ANYUTKA. Germans?

MITRITCH. That's just like you! Germans—no, not Germans, but Asiatics. They were just like Jews, but they weren't Jews either. Sort of Polyaks, but Asiatics. Krudlies . . . Kruglig . . . is their name. But I forget. We called the little girl Sashka . . . Sashka . . . and she was pretty. You see, I've forgotten everything but that little girl—may she have all that's good!¹² I seem to see her this minute. She's all I remember out of my whole service. I remember how they flogged me, and that girl I remember. She used to hang round my neck, and I'd carry her. She was such a fine girl; you wouldn't look for a better anywhere. Then we gave her away. The

¹² Literally, may her mouth be filled with a sifted flour pirog and peas.

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colonel's wife adopted her. And she grew up. How the soldiers worshipped her!

ANYUTKA. Well, grandfather, I remember how papa died. You weren't living with us then. He called Nikita, and said to him, "Forgive me," says he, "Nikita"; and he cried. (*Sighs.*) How sad, wasn't it?

MITRITCH. Well, so it was. . . .

ANYUTKA. Grandfather, oh, grandfather! what a noise they're making in the cellar again! Aï! Oh, ye saints!¹³ Oh, grandfather, they're doing something to it! They'll kill it! Such a tiny little thing—O-oh!" (*Covers her head and cries.*)

MITRITCH (*listens*). They're certainly up to some deviltry, blast them! These women are vile! You can't praise muzhiks, but these women . . . These are like wild beasts. They're not afraid of anything.

ANYUTKA (*lifts herself up*). Grandfather, oh, grandfather!

MITRITCH. Well, what is it now?

ANYUTKA. Lately a traveler spent the night here. He said that when a little one dies, its soul goes straight to heaven. Is that true?

MITRITCH. Who knows? It must be so. What of it?

ANYUTKA. But supposing I were to die? (*Whimpers.*)

MITRITCH. If you died, you'd be out of the account.

ANYUTKA. One is a child till she's ten years old; her soul might go to God then; but afterward, you see, she gets spoiled.

MITRITCH. Indeed she gets spoiled; how can you women help getting spoiled? Who teaches you? What do you see? What do you hear? Nothing but base things! Though I don't have much learning, still I know something,—not very well grounded, but better than a peasant woman in the country. What is a country peasant woman? Just mire! There are more than a million of you in Russia, and all like blind moles. You don't know anything! How to cast death-spells on a cow, and all kinds of witchcraft, and how to make children roost in the hen-house with the hens—they know all that!

¹³ *Matushki sestritsui-golubushki*; literally, little mothers, little sisters, dear little pigeons.

ANYUTKA. Mamushka has done that.

MITRITCH. Of course she has! ¹⁴ How many millions of you women, yes, and girls, too, and all like beasts of the forest! As you're born, so you die! You don't see anything, you don't hear anything! The muzhik . . . he goes to the tavern, or even to the prison . . . and he hears something there, or in the army, as I was, and learns. But the peasant woman, what can she do? She does not know much of anything about God, and she doesn't know anything reasonable about Friday! Friday, Friday,—but ask her what Friday is, she doesn't know! They crawl around like puppies with their eyes unopened and sticking their heads into the dung. . . . All they know is their foolish songs: *Ho-ho, ho-ho!* . . . But what does *Ho-ho* mean? They themselves haven't an idea! . . .

ANYUTKA. But, grandfather, I know the Lord's Prayer ¹⁵ half through.

MITRITCH. You know lots! One can't expect much of you. Who teaches you? No one but a drunken muzhik with a strap sometimes. That's the only teaching you have. So I don't know who will be responsible for you. There's an officer to look after the recruits. But there's no one to be responsible for you women. So you are a shepherdless flock, most troublesome cattle. Oh, these women, they're the stupidest of all creatures—a most empty-headed class!

ANYUTKA. But what can we do?

MITRITCH. Don't bother yourself! . . . Cover your head up and go to sleep! O Lord! (*Silence. The cricket.*)

ANYUTKA (*suddenly sits up*). Grandfather! some one's screaming! Mercy on me! some one's screaming terribly! Grandfather dear they're coming here!

MITRITCH. I say, cover your head.

¹⁴ Mitritch says, "*A to-to- i- ono-to*"; literally, "But this-this and it-this."

¹⁵ *Votcha*, for the Slavonic *Otche nash*.

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SCENE IV

The Same, NIKITA and MATRIONA

NIKITA (*enters*). What have these women done with me? What have they done with me?

MATRIONA. Drink, little berry; drink some brandy. What's the matter with you? (*Gets the liquor and sets it out.*)

NIKITA. Give it here, perhaps I might drink.

MATRIONA. Hush! You see, they aren't asleep. There, drink.

NIKITA. What made you do that! Why did you plan such a thing? You might have taken it somewhere!

MATRIONA (*in a whisper*). Sit down, sit down here. Have another drink, or else smoke. It will settle your thoughts.

NIKITA. My dear mother, this has hit me hard. How it squealed, and how those little bones crackled under me . . . kr—kr. It unmanned me!

MATRIONA. I-i! What you say has no sense to it. It's really . . . you feel a little timid at night-time, but just wait till dawn; as soon as day comes you'll forget all about it. (*She approaches NIKITA and lays her hand on his shoulder.*)

NIKITA. Go away from me! What have you made me do?

MATRIONA. Tell me, my little son, what is really the matter with you? (*Takes him by the hand.*)

NIKITA. Go away from me! I'll kill you! It's all the same to me now. I'll kill you!

MATRIONA. Akh! akh! how frightened you are! There now; you'd better go to bed.

NIKITA. I've nowhere to go to; I'm lost!

MATRIONA (*shakes her head*). Okh! okh! I must go and put things away. He'll sit here for a while; then he'll get over it. (*Exit.*)

SCENE V

NIKITA, MITRITCH, and ANYUTKA

NIKITA (*sits down, covering his face with his hands. MITRITCH and ANYUTKA are still as death*). It squeals, truly it squeals—there . . . there—plain as plain. She'll bury it, truly, she'll bury it! (*Runs to the door.*) Matushka! don't bury it—it's alive! . . .

SCENE VI

The Same, and MATRIONA

MATRIONA (*returning; in a whisper*). What's the matter with you? Christ be with you! What are you dreaming about? How could it be alive? Why, all its little bones were broken to pieces.

NIKITA. Give me some more liquor. (*Drinks.*)

MATRIONA. Go, little son! You'll sleep now. It's nothing.

NIKITA (*stands listening*). It's still alive! . . . there . . . it's squealing! Don't you hear it? There!

MATRIONA (*in a whisper*). Nothing of the sort!

NIKITA. Dear mother! I have decided my fate. What have you made me do? Where shall I go? (*Runs out of the izba, MATRIONA following him.*)

SCENE VII

MITRITCH and ANYUTKA

ANYUTKA. Grandfather, dear! galubchik! they have been smothering it!

MITRITCH (*sternly*). Go to sleep! I say. May the frogs kick you! I'll beat you with a broom! Go to sleep, I say!

ANYUTKA. Grandfather, golden one! Something clutches me by my little shoulder; clutches me, I tell

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you, clutches me with its claws! Dear grandfather, as true as I'm alive, I'm coming to you. Grandfather, golden one, let me climb up on the stove! Let me come to you for Christ's sake! It clutches me—it clutches me. . . . Aa! (*She runs to the stove.*)

MITRITCH. Ish! how they scared the poor little girl. They're vile; may the frogs kick 'em! Well, climb up here.

ANYUTKA (*climbs up on the stove*). Don't go away and leave me.

MITRITCH. Where should I go? Climb up! climb up! O Lord! Mikola the blessed! O most holy mother of God of Kazan! . . . How they scared the poor little girl! (*Covers her up*). There, then, you silly little girl! truly a little goose! . . . How they frightened her, the vile wretches; may they be choked with pie and peas!

Curtain

ACT V

A threshing-floor. In the foreground a grain-rick; at the left a platform; at the right the barn; the barn doors are open, straw in the doorway; in the distance can be seen the dvor; songs and tambourines are heard. Two girls are discovered coming along the path past the barn to the izba.

SCENE I

Two Girls

FIRST GIRL. There, do you see how we got along? We haven't soiled our shoes. But by way of the village it's awful filthy! (*They stop and wipe their feet on the straw. The first girl peers into the straw and sees something.*) What's that there?

SECOND GIRL (*looks carefully*). That's Mitritch, their man; see how drunk he is!

FIRST GIRL. But I thought he never drank!

SECOND GIRL. Evidently he's been drinking to-day.

FIRST GIRL. Look! evidently he came here after straw. You see he's got a rope in his hand, and he must have fallen asleep.

SECOND GIRL (*listens*). They're still singing the couple's praises! They can't have got through the congratulations yet. Akulina, they say, did not lament at all.¹

¹ At a typical wedding among the Russian people a chorus of women and girls praise the bride and bridegroom with elaborate comparisons. The bride, who has been compared to the red sun and the moon and to various beautiful birds, replies with a lamentation over her past youth and her bitter fate. If she does not, something is wrong.

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FIRST GIRL. Mamushka said she's marrying against her will. Her stepfather threatened her, else she would never in the world have married. You know what they say about her.

SCENE II

The Same, and MARINA

MARINA (*overtakes the girls*). How are you, girls?

THE GIRLS. How are you, auntie?

MARINA. Going to the wedding, little ones?

FIRST GIRL. Yes, it's all over now. We came to look on.

MARINA. Please call out my old man, Semyon of Zuevo. You know him, I guess.

FIRST GIRL. Of course I do. He's a relation of the bridegroom's.

MARINA. Certainly. The bridegroom is my man's nephew.

SECOND GIRL. Why don't you go yourself? Not go to the wedding?

MARINA. I don't care anything for it, little girl, and have no time. Must be going. We didn't count on coming to the wedding. We were going to town with some oats. We stopped to bait our horse, and my old man was invited in.

FIRST GIRL. Where did you go? to Feodoruitch's?

MARINA. Yes. I'll just stay here; and you just go call him, dearie, call my old man. Bring him out, darling. Tell him: "Your wife Marina wants to go; the hostlers are harnessing."

FIRST GIRL. All right, if you won't go yourself.

(The girls exeunt along the path leading to the yard. Songs and tambourines are heard.)

SCENE III

MARINA (*alone*)

MARINA (*soliliquizes*). I suppose I might go, but I don't care anything about it, because I have not seen him since the time he threw me over. It's the second year. But I should like to see with my own eyes how he lives with his Anisya. People say they quarrel. She's a rough, hot-tempered woman. I reckon he's thought of me more than once. He hankered after a comfortable life. He took her instead of me. Well, God be with him. I bear no ill-will against him. Then it hurt. . . . Akh! it was painful. But now I've got over it and forgotten it. But I should like to have a look at him. . . . (*She looks toward the dvor and sees NIKITA.*) Would you mind! Why is he coming? Could the girls have told him? Why has he left the guests? I'll go away.

SCENE IV

MARINA and NIKITA

(NIKITA *walks along at first with head bent, swinging his arms, and muttering.*)

MARINA. Why, how melancholy he seems!

NIKITA (*sees MARINA and recognizes her*). Marina! dear friend, Marinushka. What brings you here?

MARINA. I came after my husband.²

NIKITA. Why didn't you come to the wedding? You would have seen how it was, and laughed at me.

MARINA. Why should I have laughed at you? I came after my husband.

NIKITA. Ekh, Marinushka! (*Tries to embrace her.*)

MARINA (*tears herself away angrily*). Now, Nikita, put an end to those tricks. What used to be has gone by. I came after my husband. He's in your house, isn't he?

² *Starik*, old man. In the next speech she calls him her *khozyain*.

NIKITA. That means you won't remember old times, does it? You forbid it, do you?

MARINA. The old times are forgotten. What has been is past.

NIKITA. You mean you won't come back?

MARINA. It never will come back. But why have you come out? You are the master, and here you have left the wedding!

NIKITA (*sits on the straw*). Why have I come out? Ekh! if you only knew and could see! . . . I felt gloomy, Marina; so gloomy, I couldn't see out of my eyes. So I crept away from the table, and came out, came away from people, so as not to see any one.

MARINA (*comes nearer to him*). What is the matter?

NIKITA. Something so that in eating I can't eat it away, and in drinking I can't drink it away, and in sleeping I can't sleep it away. Akh! it's loathsome to me, so loathsome! And worse than all, Marinushka, I am sick because I am alone, and have no one to share my sorrow with.

MARINA. No one, Nikita, lives without sorrow. I cried over mine, and it has passed away.

NIKITA. That was about the former days, about the old times. Ekh, my dear! You cried over your trouble, but now it has come to me!

MARINA. What is it?

NIKITA. Something which has made my whole life disgusting to me. I am disgusted with myself. Ekh! Marina, you weren't able to keep me, and so you ruined me and yourself too. Tell me, is this living?

MARINA (*stands by the barn weeping and trying to restrain herself*). I do not complain of my life, Nikita. May God give all men as good! I do not complain. I confessed everything to my old man. He forgave me. And he never reproaches me. And I cannot find fault with my life. My husband is kind. He likes me, and I wash and dress his children. He sympathizes with me. Why should I complain? This has evidently been God's judgment. And what is the matter with your life? You are rich . . .

NIKITA. My life? . . . Except that I don't want to

cloud the wedding, I would take a rope—this one here (*he picks up the rope from the straw*)—and I'd throw it over that beam there. Then I'd make a nice little noose, and I'd climb up and put my head in it. That's what my life is!

MARINA. Enough! Christ be with you!

NIKITA. Do you think I am joking? Do you think I am drunk? I am not drunk. To-day not even drink³ takes hold of me. But I am eaten up with wretchedness, with wretchedness. At the dinner, it devoured me so that nothing tasted good to me. Ekh! Marinushka, the only life I ever had was with you . . . Do you remember how we used to shorten the time those nights at the station?

MARINA. Nikita, don't rub the old sore! I have taken on the law, and so have you. My sin has been pardoned; don't bring up the past. . . .

NIKITA. What can I do with my heart? What shall I do with myself?

MARINA. What can you do? You have a wife; don't lust after other women, but cherish your own. You used to love Anisya—love her still.

NIKITA. Ekh! That Anisya is as bitter as worm-wood to me! Just like witch-grass she twined herself round my feet.

MARINA. Whatever she is, she's your wife. . . . Why talk so foolishly? You'd better go to your guests, and send my husband out to me.

NIKITA. Ekh! if you only knew the whole trouble! But then, what's to be said?

SCENE V

NIKITA, MARINA, *her* HUSBAND, and ANYUTKA

MARINA'S HUSBAND (*comes out of the dvor flushed and drunk*). Marina! Wife! Old woman! Where are you?

NIKITA. Here's your husband coming; he's calling for you. Go!

³ *Khmyel*; literally, hops.

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MARINA. What are you going to do?

NIKITA. I? I'll lie here. (*Flings himself down in the straw.*)

MARINA'S HUSBAND. Where is she?

ANYUTKA. Here she is, uncle, near the barn.

MARINA'S HUSBAND. What are you standing here for? Go in to the wedding. The host and hostess bid you come, and do them the honor. The wedding will be over soon, and then we'll go.

MARINA (*goes toward her* HUSBAND). Well, I didn't care to.

MARINA'S HUSBAND. Go, I say. You'll drink a little glass, and congratulate Petrunka, the rascal. The folks'll feel offended; we'll have time enough for all our business.

(MARINA'S HUSBAND *puts his arm round her, and, staggering, goes up with her.*)

SCENE VI

NIKITA and ANYUTKA

NIKITA (*gets up, then sits on the straw*). Ekh! I've seen her; and I feel gloomier than ever. The only joy I ever had was with her. I have ruined my whole life all for nothing! I have ruined myself⁴ completely. (*Lies down.*) Where can I go? Akh! Open and swallow me, moist Mother Earth!

ANYUTKA (*sees NIKITA and runs to him*). Father, oh, father,⁵ they're asking for you. All of them have given their congratulations—even the godfather! As true as I breathe, they've already given their congratulations; they'll be angry with you!

NIKITA (*to himself*). Where shall I hide?

ANYUTKA. What is the matter with you? What are you saying?

⁴ Literally, my head.

⁵ *Batyushka*.

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NIKITA. I'm not saying anything. What are you bothering me for?

ANYUTKA. Father! Come, let us go! (NIKITA is silent. ANYUTKA pulls him by the hand.) Batya! Come and give them your blessing. Truly they are angry; they're saying hard things about you.

NIKITA (*snatches away his hand*). Let me be!

ANYUTKA. There now!

NIKITA (*threatens her with the reins*). Get you gone, I say! else I'll give it to you.

ANYUTKA. Then I'll send mamushka. (*She runs away.*)

SCENE VII

NIKITA (*alone*)

NIKITA (*gets up*). Now how can I go? How can I take the holy image? How can I look into her eyes? (*Lies down again.*) Okh! if only the damp earth would open and let me hide there! Then folks wouldn't see me, they'd never see me more. (*Again he gets up.*) No, I won't go! . . . May they perish, every one of 'em! I won't go! (*He takes off his boots and picks up the rope; then he makes a noose with it and fits it to his neck.*) This is the way!

SCENE VIII

NIKITA and MATRIONA

(NIKITA sees his mother, takes off the rope from his neck, and lies down again in the straw.)

MATRIONA (*comes hastily up to him*). Nikita, oh, Nikita! Would you mind, he doesn't even answer! Nikita, what's the matter with you? or are you drunk? Come, Mikitushka; come, little berry! The people are waiting.

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NIKITA. Akh! what have you made me do? I am not the man I was.

MATRIONA. Tell me, what's the matter? Come, dear, give them the honor of your blessing; and it'll be done with. See, the people are waiting.

NIKITA. How can I give them my blessing?

MATRIONA. It's easy enough. Don't you know how?

NIKITA. I know, I know. But who is it I'm to bless? What have I done with her?

MATRIONA. What have you done? The idea of remembering such a thing! No one knows anything about it—neither cat nor king!⁶ And the girl marries of her own accord.

NIKITA. How does she?

MATRIONA. Well, of course, there was some threat used. But she marries all the same. And what else could be done? She should have counted the cost beforehand. It's too late for her to resist. There's no complaint from the matchmakers. They inspected the girl twice, and she's got money. All is settled and covered.

NIKITA. But what's in the cellar?

MATRIONA (*laughs*). What's in the cellar? Cabbages, mushrooms, potatoes, I reckon. Why recall what's past?

NIKITA. I should be glad not to, but I can't help it. When my thoughts turn on it, then I hear it. Okh! what have you made me do?

MATRIONA. Why do you act so?

NIKITA (*turns over and lies on his face*). Matushka! Don't torment me! I have more than I can bear.

MATRIONA. But still you must do it. The people, even as it is, are talking; and here the father suddenly goes out and doesn't come back! He's afraid to give his blessing! They'll soon smell a rat. If you show yourself so timid they'll instantly suspect. Walk boldly if you don't want to be taken for a thief.⁷ If you run

⁶ *Ni kot, ni koshka,
Ni pop Yermoshka:*

Neither grimalkin, nor pussy-cat, nor the priest Yermoshka.

⁷ Another of Matriona's rhymed bits of wisdom:

*Khodi torom
Nye polozhat vorom.*

from the wolf you fall into bruin's paws. Above all, don't show your feelings; don't be timid, my boy, or else they'll put on it the worst construction.

NIKITA. Ekh! you have entrapped me!

MATRIONA. There now, stop, and let us go! Come, give them your blessing. Let everything be done honorably and that'll be the end of it.

NIKITA (*still lies on his face*). I can't.

MATRIONA (*to herself*). Now what has happened to him? He was all right before; it came upon him suddenly. It's evidently an affliction. Nikita, get up! Look, here comes Anisya. She has left the guests!

SCENE IX

NIKITA, MATRIONA, and ANISYA

ANISYA (*in holiday attire, flushed with drinking*). How jolly it's been, matushka!—so fine and honorable! And how contented the people are! . . . Where is he?

MATRIONA. Here, little berry, here! He's lying on the straw, and won't get up! He won't come.

NIKITA. (*glances at his wife*). Ish! she's drunk, too. When I see her it makes me sick. How can I live with her? (*Turns over on his belly again.*) I'll kill her sometime. It'll be worse!

ANISYA. So here you are, in the straw. Have you been taking too much? (*Laughs.*) I would lie down with you, but I have no time. Come on; I'll lead the way. And how nice it is in the house! Charming to look at! And the harmonica! The women are singing! How lovely! All are tipsy: it's a creditable affair! So nice!

NIKITA. What is nice?

ANISYA. The wedding; a jolly wedding. All the people say such a wedding doesn't happen every day. It's all so fine and honorable. Come now. Let us go together. . . . I've been drinking, but I can lead the way. (*Takes him by the hand.*)

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NIKITA (*snatches his hand away in disgust*). Go by yourself. I'll come.

ANISYA. What makes you so cross? All our troubles are past. We've got rid of the impediment. We can live now. All we've got to do is to rejoice. Everything is so honorably arranged—according to law. I'm so glad, I can't begin to tell it. It's just as if I were marrying you again. I-i! How satisfied the people are! All are giving their congratulations. And such fine guests we have. Even Ivan Moseyitch and the Uryadnik. They've sung their praises, too.

NIKITA. Well, go and sit with them! What made you leave them?

ANISYA. There! you must come! It is not proper for the host and hostess to go away and leave their guests, and the guests all such fine ones.

NIKITA (*gets up and brushes off the straw*). You go. I'll follow immediately.

MATRIONA. The night cuckoo cuckooed louder than the day cuckoo! He would not listen to me; but he instantly follows his wife. (*MATRIONA and ANISYA start to go.*) Will you come?

NIKITA. I'll come immediately. You go, and I'll follow. I'll come and give the blessing. . . . (*The women hesitate.*) Go, and I'll follow. Go, I say! (*The women leave him; NIKITA watches them in thoughtful mood.*)

SCENE X

NIKITA alone; then MITRITCH

NIKITA (*sits and takes off his shoes and stockings*). So I'm expected to go! How could I? No, if you hunt you'll find me on the beam perhaps. I unslipped the noose, jumped from the beam, and thus you'll find me! And here are some reins, fortunately. (*Ponders.*) I could banish any kind of sorrow; I could banish it. But this of mine, it is heavy in my heart; I can't get rid of it. (*He looks toward the dvor.*) She's not coming again. (*Mimicking ANISYA.*) "How nice, and

how nice! I would lie down with you!" Uh! the ugly old hag! Curse you! You can throw your arms around me when they take me down from the beam. There can be but one end!⁸ (*Takes hold of the rope and pulls at it.*)

MITRITCH (*tipsy; gets up and clings to the rope*). I won't let go. I won't give it up to any one. I said I'd bring the straw and I will. I'll carry it myself. Nikita . . . is it you? (*Laughs.*) Oh, the devil!⁹ are you after straw?

NIKITA. Give me the rope.

MITRITCH. No, you wait. The muzhiks sent me. I'll carry it. . . . (*Staggeres to his feet, begins to gather up straw, but totters; tries to save himself, and finally falls.*) She's¹⁰ got the upper hand! she's won the day! . . .

NIKITA. Give me the reins.

MITRITCH. I told you, I wouldn't give 'em. Akh! Miskishka, you're stupid, like a fat pig. (*Laughs.*) I like you, but you're stupid! You look at me as if I was drunk. The devil take you, as far as I'm concerned. You think I need you. . . . Look at me, will you! I'm a non-commissioned officer:¹¹ fool! you can't say 'Under-officer of the first regiment of his Majesty's grenadiers.' I have served the Tsar and my fatherland faithfully and well. But who am I? Do you think I'm a soldier? No! I'm not a soldier! I'm the very last man. I'm an orphan, I'm a waif! I swore off from drinking, and now I've begun again. . . . Say, do you think I'm afraid of you? Why should I be? I'm not afraid of any one. . . . When it comes to drinking, I'll drink! Now for two weeks I'll stink of it; I'll be drunk every day. I'll drink up even my cross; I'll drink my hat, I'll pawn my billet, and I'm not afraid of any one. They flogged me in the regiment to keep me from drinking. They thrashed and they lashed. "Will you stop it?" said they. "No, I won't," said I. Why be afraid of them? That's the kind of

⁸ Russian, *Odyn koniets*, "one end."

⁹ *Akh, chort.*

¹⁰ *Yeya*, "She," the *vodka*!

¹¹ *Ya unter; unter for unter-ofitser.*

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man I am.¹² A man is as God made him. I swore off from drinking. I did not drink. Now I've been drinking again, and I'm going to drink. And I'm not afraid of any one. For I don't lie, I tell the truth. . . . Why fear them,—so much muck! That's the kind of man I am, I tell you. A priest once told me: "The devil himself is a braggart. As soon as you begin to boast," says he, "that shows you're a coward. As soon as you are timid before folks, then he, the devil, comes and carries you off and keeps you where he wants you." And so I'm not timid at all before folks; it's easy for me. I sneeze in the devil's beard and his fire-shovel, and his mother, the pig. He won't do anything to me. There! Chew that over!

NIKITA (*crosses himself*). What am I in fact? (*Throw down the rope.*)

MITRITCH. What?

NIKITA (*gets up*). Didn't you tell me not to be afraid of folks.

MITRITCH. What's there to be afraid of; the muck? Look at them in the bath, all of one clay. One has a bigger belly, another's thinner; that's the only difference among them. Away with them! What's there to be afraid of? . . . May their mouths be stuffed with pie and peas!

SCENE XI

NIKITA, MITRITCH, and MATRIONA

MATRIONA (*comes from the dvor and calls*). Well, are you coming?

NIKITA. Okh! Yes, I suppose it's better. I'm coming. (*Goes toward the dvor.*)

Curtain

¹² *Vot on ya*, literally "here he I."

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Tableau II

[In the original this is called Stsena II.]

Change of stage. The Izba of Act I. filled with people, sitting at tables and standing about. In the front room AKULINA and the bridegroom. On a table ikons and bread. Among the guests MARINA, her husband, and the URYADNIK. The women are singing songs. ANISYA is passing liquor. The songs cease.

SCENE I

ANISYA, MARINA, MARINA'S HUSBAND, AKULINA, THE BRIDEGROOM, *an* IZVOSHCHIK, THE MATCHMAKER, THE BEST MAN, MATRIONA, Guests, *and* People.

IZVOSHCHIK. If it's time to start, let's start; the church ain't very near.

THE BEST MAN. Oh, just wait! the stepfather is going to give his blessing. But where is he?

ANISYA. He's coming; he'll be here directly, my dear friends. Have a little more to drink; don't be afraid.

THE MATCHMAKER. Why is he so long? What a time we've been waiting already!

ANISYA. He's coming; he'll be here directly. A girl with close-cropped hair wouldn't have time to braid it before he gets here. Drink, friends. (*Offers liquor.*) He'll be here directly! Sing another song, my beauties, till he comes.

IZVOSHCHIK. They've sung all their songs while waiting.

(*The women sing; in the middle of the song, NIKITA and AKIM enter.*)

SCENE II

The Same, NIKITA, and AKIM

NIKITA (*holds AKIM by the arm and pushes him in front of him*). Go on, batyushka; it can't be done without you.

AKIM. I don't like it . . . that is . . . of course. . . .

NIKITA (*to the women*). Hush! stop it! (*Looks round at all in the izba.*) Marina, are you here?

The MATCHMAKER. Come, get the image, and give the blessing.

NIKITA. Wait! give me time. (*Looks around.*) Akulina, are you here?

THE MATCHMAKER. What are you calling out to people like that for? Where else should she be? What makes him act so strangely? . . .

ANISYA. Ye saints! why he's barefooted!

NIKITA. Batyushka! are you here? Look at me! Orthodox Commune, you are all here, and I am here. See what a kind of man I am! (*Falls on his knees.*)

ANISYA. Mikitushka, what's the matter with you? O my poor head! ¹³

THE MATCHMAKER. Now, look at that!

MATRIONA. I say! he's been drinking too much French wine. Come to your senses, do! (*She tries to get him to his feet; he pays no attention to any one, but looks straight ahead.*)

NIKITA. Orthodox Mir! I am a guilty man. I want to confess!

MATRIONA (*pulls him by the shoulder*). What is the matter with you? are you out of your senses? He has gone crazy, dears; we must take him away!

NIKITA (*frees his shoulder from her hand*). Let me be! And do you listen to me, batyushka! First of all! Marina, look here (*bows humbly before her and then gets up*). I am guilty toward you; I promised to marry you. I seduced you, I broke my word, I abandoned you;

¹³O golovushka moyá; golovushka is the diminutive of golova.

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forgive me, for Christ's sake. (*Again he bows very low.*)

ANISYA. What nonsense are you giving us? This is not to the point at all. No one asked you anything. Get up. Why are you so impudent?

MATRIONA. O-okh! an evil spell has brought this on him. What has done this? He is bewitched! Get up! What empty nonsense you talk! (*Pulls him.*)

NIKITA (*shakes his head*). Don't touch me! Forgive me, Marina. I have sinned toward you; forgive me, for Christ's sake!

(MARINA covers her face with her hands and says nothing.)

ANISYA. Get up, I say. Why are you so impudent? You're crazy to recall it! Stop making a fool of yourself. It's shameful! oh, my poor head. Oh, he's gone perfectly crazy!

NIKITA (*pushes aside his wife and turns to AKULINA*). Akulina, now I have something to say to you. Listen to me, orthodox Mir! I am cursed! Akulina, I am guilty toward you. Your father did not die a natural death. He was poisoned!

ANISYA (*screams*). My poor head! What is the matter with him?

MATRIONA. The man is beside himself. Take him away. (*The people approach to lead him away.*)

AKIM (*opens out his arms*). Wait! you boys, just wait, don't you know . . .

NIKITA. Akulina, I poisoned him. Forgive me, for Christ's sake.

AKULINA (*jumps up*). He lies! I know who it was!

THE MATCHMAKER. What's the matter with you?¹⁴ Sit down!

AKIM. O Lord! what a sin! what a sin!

URYADNIK. Guard him! And send for the Starosta and the assistants. We must draw up the indictment. You get up and come here.

¹⁴ *Chto tui*, "What, thou?"

AKIM (*to the URYADNIK*). Say, you, bright buttons, don't you know, you just wait. Let him say what he's got to say, don't you know.

THE URYADNIK (*to AKIM*). Look here, old man, don't you interfere. I must draw up the paper.

AKIM. What kind of a man are you! Wait, I tell you. Don't talk about a paper now, don't you know. This affair here's in God's hands—the man, don't you see, is confessing his sins—and talk about an indictment! . . .

THE URYADNIK. Send for the Starosta.

AKIM. Let God's work go on! When that's done, don't you know, you may do yours, of course.

NIKITA. Akulina, my sin toward you is great. I seduced you; forgive me, for Christ's sake! (*Bows humbly before her.*)

AKULINA (*comes out from behind the table*). Let me be, I will not be married. He ordered me to, but now I will not.

URYADNIK. Repeat what you said.

NIKITA. Wait, Mr. Uryadnik; let me speak to the end.

AKIM (*in rapture*). Speak, my dear child, tell it all—it will be easier. Confess to God; don't be afraid of men. God—God, He is here! . . .

NIKITA. I poisoned the father, dog that I was; I ruined the daughter, she was in my power; and I destroyed the baby.

AKULINA. That's the truth, the truth!

NIKITA. I smothered the little baby under a board in the cellar. I sat on it. . . . I smothered it. . . . And its little bones cracked under it! (*Sobs.*) And I buried it in the ground. I did it—I alone!

AKULINA. He lies! I told him to . . .

NIKITA. Don't shield me! I'm not afraid of anyone now. Forgive me, orthodox Mir! (*Bows to the ground.*)

(*Silence*)

THE URYADNIK. Bind him; your wedding, of course, is declared off. (*The men approach with their girdles.*)

NIKITA. Wait, you'll have time enough. . . . (*He*

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bows humbly at his father's feet.) My dear father,¹⁵ forgive your accursed son. You warned me at the very beginning. When I first began this wicked life, you told me,—“If one claw is caught the whole bird is lost.” But I did not heed your words, dog that I was, and it has turned out as you said it would. Forgive me, for Christ's sake!

AKIM (*in rapture*). God will forgive! my dear child. (*Embraces him.*) You have not spared yourself. He will have mercy on you. God—God, He is here!

SCENE III

The Same, and THE STAROSTA

THE STAROSTA (*enters*). There are many witnesses here.

THE URYADNIK. We will take the depositions immediately. (*They bind NIKITA.*)

AKULINA (*approaches and stands next him*). I will tell the truth. Ask me also!

NIKITA (*bound*). It's of no use questioning the witnesses. I did it all myself. It was my idea, and my own act. Take me where you please. I will say nothing more.

Curtain

¹⁵ *Batyushka rodimui.*

THE FIRST DISTILLER

LIST OF CHARACTERS

(In the Order of their Appearance)

MUZHÍK.

LITTLE DEVIL (MUZHIKS' DEVILKIN). Later appearing as FARM-HAND.

DUDISH DEVILKIN.

CHIEF DEVIL (STARSHOĭ).

THE DEVILS' CLERK.

JUDICIAL DEVILKIN.

NEIGHBOR.

MUZHÍK'S WIFE (BABA).

GRANDFATHER (STARÍK).

GRANDMOTHER (STARUKHA).

FIRST ELDER.

SECOND ELDER.

THIRD ELDER.

FOURTH ELDER.

GIRLS.

YOUNG MEN.

THE FIRST DISTILLER¹

(1886)

ACT I

SCENE I

MUZHNIK (*Plowing, looks up*). Why, it's noon! Time to knock off. But geddap! You're starved, poor dear! I'll make one turn more and finish this last furrow and then dinner. Thank goodness? I had my wits about me and brought a hunk of bread. I'm not going home. I'll eat my grub by the well and have a little snooze, and Bulanka, you shall graze a bit. Then, with God's help, to work again! I'll get my plowing done early, God willing.

SCENE II

(*A Devilkin—CHERTYONOK—runs over to a bush*)

CHERTYONOK. Ish, what a pious fellow! Always mentioning God. Just you wait a bit and you'll be calling on the Devil! I'm going to cabbage his crust. He'll go to get it; he'll hunt; he'll be in a hurry to gobble it, then he'll curse and mention the Devil.

(*Grabs the bread, carries it off and crouches behind the Bush, watching to see what the MUZHNIK will do.*)

MUZHNIK (*Unfastens the traces*). Lord, give me Thy blessing! (*Leads out the horse, lets him loose, goes to his kaftan*) I'm monstrous hungry; the old woman cut

¹Dramatization of the "Popular Legend" entitled "How the Little Devil Earned a Crust of Bread" (p. 183 of "Ivan Ilyitch").

off a big chunk but I guess I shall eat it all. (*Reaches the kaftan*) 'Taint here! I certainly covered it with my kaftan. (*Lifts up the kaftan*) And 'taint here neither! That's queer. (*Shakes the kaftan.*)

CHERTYONOK (*behind the bush*). Hunt, hunt! But here it is! (*Sits on it.*)

MUZHNIK (*Lifts up the plow-handle; shakes the kaftan again*). Strange, indeed it's strange. No one has been here and yet the crust has gone! If the birds had pecked at it, there'd be crumbs; but not a crumb's to be seen. No one's been here; yet someone's carried it off.

CHERTYONOK (*Rises, looks intently*). He'll be calling on me next!

MUZHNIK. Evidently it's my luck! Still I shan't starve to death. If it's carried off, it's carried off. Good health to the one eating it!

CHERTYONOK (*Spits*). Akh, you damned muzhik! He ought to be cursing but he says "To his good health!" One can't do anything with him. (*The MUZHNIK lies down for a nap, crosses himself, yawns and falls asleep.*)

CHERTYONOK (*Comes out from behind the bush*). Now talk, Old Un! The Old Un is always saying: "You bring mighty few muzhiks to me here in Hell. Just look: merchants, gentlemen and every other kind come in every day but only a few muzhiks." How can one get him? There's no way of approach to him. What better could one do? I cabbaged his last crust and still he didn't use a bad word! I don't know what to do now. I'll go and report. (*Sinks out of sight.*)

Curtain.

ACT II

HELL

In the Chief Place the SENIOR DEVIL is sitting. The Devils' CLERK sits below at a table with writing materials. GUARDS are stationed at the sides. At the Right five Little Devils of various Kinds; at the Left by the Doors, the WARDER. One DUDISH DEVILKIN is standing directly in front of the STARSHOI or SENIOR DEVIL.

DUDISH DEVILKIN. My whole haul for three years has been 220,005 human beings. I've got them all now in my power.

STARSHOI. Fine! I thank you. Pass in!

(The DUDISH DEVILKIN passes to the Right.)

(To the CLERK) I am tired. Is there much more business before us? From whom have we already received reports and from whom are reports still to come?

CLERK *(Counts on his fingers and at each enumeration points at the DEVILKINS standing at the Right. Whenever he mentions the name of a DEVILKIN, that one bows)*. Report received from the Boyar Demon. His crop is 836 in all. From the Merchant Demon, 9643. From the Judicial Demon, 3423. From the Female Demon, 186,315 women, 17,438 girls. Only two are lacking—the Clerk Demon and the Muzhik Demon. So far, there are 220,005.¹

STARSHOI. It looks now as if we should get through to-day. *(To the WARDEN)* Let 'em in! *(Enter the Little LAWYER-DEVIL, bows to the ELDER)* Well, how now? How did your affairs go?

¹The Arithmetic of Hell seems rather inaccurate. The figures given count 217,646. Starshy Chort, izvinite menya!

THE FIRST DISTILLER

LAWYER-DEVILKIN (*All the time grinning and rubbing his hands*). My loot's black as soot! Such a haul as I don't remember since the world began.

STARSHOI. Tell us, did you rake in a whole lot?

LAWYER-DEVILKIN. It isn't a matter of numbers, though there aren't a very great number—only 1350, still they're such bully chaps—such chaps as might be taken for Devils. They annoy folks much worse than Devils do. I've instituted a new fashion for them.

STARSHOI. What kind of a new fashion?

LAWYER-DEVILKIN. This is the way of it: formerly they were controlled by the judges; they cheated people. But now I have taught them to be independent of the judges. One will work for those that give 'em the most money. And one will work up cases where there isn't any case. They harm folks much worse than Devils do.

STARSHOI. I'll look into it. Pass on! (*The LAWYER-DEVIL goes to the Right. Addressing the WARDER*) Admit the last.

(*Enter the MUZHIK-DEVILKIN holding the crust and bowing low.*)

MUZHIK-DEVILKIN. It's no use living any longer; put me on another job!

STARSHOI. Put you where? What nonsense are you talking? Stand up straight and speak plainly! Give your report: how many muzhiks have you got this week?

MUZHIK-DEVILKIN (*Weeps*). Not a one!

STARSHOI. What, not one? Why not one? What have you been doing? Where have you been wasting your time?

MUZHIK-DEVILKIN (*Whimpering*). I haven't been wasting my time; I've worn myself to a frazzle but I couldn't do a thing. Here is a crust of bread I stole right from under a fellow's nose—his last one! and he didn't even swear but wished me good health in eating it.

STARSHOI. What? . . . What nonsense are you giving us? Blow your nose and tell us plainly, for nothing can be made out of what you say.

MUZHİK-DEVILKIN. There was a muzhik plowing and I knew that he had just one hunk of bread and nothing else to eat. I cabbaged his crust from him. He ought to have cursed and what did he do? He says: "Good health to the one eating it." Here I've brought the crust I stole from him. Here it is.

STARSHOÏ. Well but how about others?

MUZHİK-DEVILKIN. Yes, but they're all alike; I didn't get a single one.

STARSHOÏ. Now how do you dare to come back to me with empty hands. The idea of bringing that stinking hunk of bread! Do you expect to get fed in Hell for nothing? Look at these Demons here (*Points to the other DEVILKINS*): that one has brought in 10,000, that one 20,000, that one there 200,000. Others try, they work. And here you come with empty hands; ay, you bring us a miserable crust! You tell me lying tales! You loaf, you don't work! And so they get out of your clutches. Just you wait, brother, I'll teach you!

MUZHİK-DEVILKIN. Don't have me punished! Let me say a word! It's fine for those Devils—with Boyars or with merchants or with women. It's a soft snap: show a Boyarin a sable cap or a big estate and he's yours instantly and you can lead him where you wish; the same with a merchant; show him money and stir up his envy and you'll lead him as with a lassoo; he won't escape. And so too with a woman it's an easy trick: finery and sweets—then do with her as you want. Just try it on a muzhik! He's at work from morning till night, ay, he keeps it up into the night and he never starts anything without God! How are you going to get at him? Father, let me off from the muzhiks; they torment me to death! And I have made you angry.

STARSHOÏ. You babble nonsense, you lazy dog! It's no good pointing at the others. They catch the merchants and the boyars and the women because they know how to get round them; they are always up to new tricks. Here's the Lawyer-Demon has got up an entirely new tune. You too invent something. The idea of boasting that you ragged a crust! Vish! What craftiness! Throw nets over 'em and they'll tumble into

one or another of them. But while you've been dallying round, you gave 'em a chance—they, those muzhiks of yours have been renewing their strength. That one didn't even mourn for his crust! If they get into such habits and teach 'em to their women besides, then they'll get entirely out of hand. Put your wits to work! Lay yourself out as you know how!

MUZHİK-DEVILKIN. I don't know how to invent anything. Let me off. I can't do anything more.

STARSHOÏ (*In wrath*). Can't do anything more! I want to know if I myself have got to go and do your work.

MUZHİK-DEVILKIN. I can't.

STARSHOÏ. You can't hey! Just wait! Ei! Bring the rods here, lambast him!

(*The Guards grab the LITTLE DEVIL and lay on with rods.*)

MUZHİK-DEVILKIN. Oi! Oi! Oi!

STARSHOÏ. Have you thought of something?

MUZHİK-DEVILKIN. Oi! Oi! I can't think of anything!

STARSHOÏ. Give him some some! (*They flog him*) Have you thought up something?

MUZHİK-DEVILKIN. I've thought of something, I've thought of something!

STARSHOÏ. Well, tell us what you have thought of?

MUZHİK-DEVILKIN. I've thought up such a trick that I'll get 'em all into my hands. Only let me take a job as a hired man for a muzhik, but I can't tell you beforehand what I'll do.

STARSHOÏ. All right then; only remember that if within three years you don't earn your crust, I take the skin off you.

MUZHİK-DEVILKIN. In three years they'll all be mine.

STARSHOÏ. Good! In three years I'll come myself and see what you've done.

Curtain

ACT III

Granary. Carts are standing with grain

SCENE I

(FARMHAND-DEVIL is filling from receptacles the carts;
MUZHIK carries them away)

HIRED MAN. Seventh.

MUZHNIK. How many chetverts? ¹

HIRED MAN. (*Looks at the marks on the door*).
Twenty-six chetverts and the seventh measure toward
the twenty-seventh.

MUZHNIK. It won't all go in; it's full already.

HIRED MAN. Press it down good!

MUZHNIK. So I have. (*Carries off the measure.*)

SCENE II

HIRED MAN. (*Alone; takes off his cap, the horns become manifest*). He won't be coming out in a hurry now. I can straighten my horns a bit. (*The horns arrange themselves*) And I'm going to take off my boots, I can't do it when he's here. (*Pulls his feet out of his boots. Hoofs are visible. He sits down on the threshold.*) Now here it's getting toward the end of the third year. This thing's got to be settled soon. He's got more grain than he knows what to do with. It only remains to play my last trick on him. And then let the Old Un himself come and do his inspecting. There'll be something for him to see. He'll pay me for the crust. (*A NEIGHBOR comes along.*)

¹ A chetvert corresponds to 5.77 bushels.

SCENE III

NEIGHBOR. How are you?

HIRED MAN. How are you?

NEIGHBOR. Where's your boss?

HIRED MAN. He's off stuffing the grain into the big corn-bin; he can't get it all in.

NEIGHBOR. What abundance your boss has! And no room for storing it! We are all amazed at the harvest which your boss has reaped these last two years. One would think some one had tipped him a wink. Last Summer, it was a dry year and he sowed in the swamp; while the seed didn't even sprout for the rest of us, you had your granaries running over. This year it's been a wet Summer and he had the gumption to do his seeding on the high ground. It all moulded for the rest of us but you have more grain than you need. And what grain, what grain! (*He rubs some in his hands and tests it with his teeth.*)

SCENE IV

MUZHUK (*Comes with his empty measure*). How are you, neighbor?

NEIGHBOR. How are you? I have just been talking with your man here about how you hit it in putting in your seed. All the folks are envious of you. What grain you've got! You won't eat it all in ten years.

MUZHUK. Well, it's thanks to Potap. (*Indicates his HIRED MAN.*) It's his good luck. I sent him out last year to plow and he takes it upon him to plow in the swamp. I gave him a scolding. But he persuaded me to put the seed in there. We sowed it there and it came out all for the best. And then again this year he hit it right in seeding the high ground.

NEIGHBOR. Yes, he knows exactly what the year's going to be. Yes, you've got a store of grain! (*Silence.*) I just came over to borrow of you a little

*osminka*² of rye. Mine's all gone; I'll pay it back next Summer.

MUZHNIK. Why certainly; help yourself.

HIRED MAN (*Nudges the MUZHNIK*). Don't give it to him.

MUZHNIK. He will have his say.—Take it.

NEIGHBOR. Thanks; I'll run after a bag.

HIRED MAN (*Aside*). He still sticks to his old habit—keeps giving. But he'll be heeding me in everything. Well, let me have my chance and he'll soon stop giving.
(*Exit NEIGHBOR.*)

SCENE V

MUZHNIK (*Sitting down on the threshold*). Why not give to a good man?

HIRED MAN. Sure you can give, but you get nothing back. If you lend it's like throwing something down hill, but to collect the debt is dragging it up. That's what the old men say.

MUZHNIK. Don't fret! There's plenty of grain.

HIRED MAN. What's that—"plenty enough?"

MUZHNIK. Not only enough to last till the next harvest but for two years more. What's to be done with it?

HIRED MAN. What do you mean, "to be done with it?" Why, I'll make you something so good out of this grain that you will be glad all your life long.

MUZHNIK. What is it you'll make?

HIRED MAN. Why, I'll make a drink—such a drink that if your strength is gone 'twill bring it back to you; if you are hungry 'twill make you full; if you're blue, you'll feel gay; if you've lost your grip, it will give you new courage. That's the kind of a drink I will make.

MUZHNIK. That's a great story!

HIRED MAN. You mean I'm telling a lie? The same way you didn't believe me when I told you to plant your grain first in the swamp and then on the high ground! You know now. In the same way you'll know about the drink.

² Diminutive of *Osmina*, in dry measure; corresponds to 11.55 pecks.

MUZHNIK. Yes, but what are you going to make it out of?

HIRED MAN. Why, out of this very same grain.

MUZHNIK. But won't that be a sin?

HIRED MAN. Look here! What kind of a sin I'd like to know. Everything is meant for man's pleasure.

MUZHNIK. But Potap, where did you get all that great cleverness of yours? When I look at you, I should call you not a man o' parts but just a laborer. Here you've been living with me and not a single once have you took off your clothes. And here you know everything! How on earth did you come by it all?

HIRED MAN. Why, I've been everywhere.

MUZHNIK. So I'll get strength from it, from this drink of yours.

HIRED MAN. You'll soon see—everything good comes from it.

MUZHNIK. How do we make it?

HIRED MAN. It's no trick to make it when you know how. All you need is to get a kettle and a couple of iron pots.

MUZHNIK. And is it pleasant to taste?

HIRED MAN. Sweet as honey! Taste it once and you won't give it up as long as you live.

MUZHNIK. Really? I'll go to my neighbor's; he used to have a kettle. We must try it!

Curtain.

ACT IV

The Stage represents a barn in the center of which stand a kettle set in cement over a fire, an iron pot with spigot. MUZHIK and HIRED MAN.

SCENE I

HIRED MAN (*Holds a glass under the spigot and drinks the liquor*). Now, master, it's ready.

MUZHUK (*Squats on his haunches and watches*). So that's the trick! Water—come out of the dough! Tell me, why do you let the water off first?

HIRED MAN. That's not water, it's the stuff itself.

MUZHUK. Why is it so clear? I thought it would be brown like beer. But it's just like water.

HIRED MAN. There! Take a sniff of it.

MUZHUK (*Smells it*). Ukh! It's fragrant! Here now, here now, let me try how it will be in my mouth. (*Snatches it out of his hand.*)

HIRED MAN. Wait, you'll spill it. (*Turns the spigot, takes a drink and clicks his tongue.*) It's ripe—drink!

MUZHUK (*At first merely sips it, then takes more and more and finally swallows it all. Hands back the glass*). Now give me some more. One can't tell the taste with so little.

HIRED MAN (*Laughs*). Didn't you like it? (*Fills the glass again.*)

MUZHUK (*Drinks*). Well, it's some drink! I must call the wife! Eï, Marfa, come! Done to a turn! Come, come, will you!

SCENE II

Wife—BABA—GIRL and the Same

BABA. Well, what is it? Why yell so?

MUZHNIK. Here, you just taste what we've got ready to drink. (*Hands it to her.*) Sniff, how good it smells!

BABA (*Puts it to her nose*). Vish tui!

MUZHNIK. Drink it!

BABA. Mightn't some harm come of it?

MUZHNIK. Drink it, goosie!

BABA (*Drinks*). Well, that is good!

MUZHNIK (*Becoming a little mellow*). Good, you say! You jusht wait for what's going to be! Potap told me it makesh all your tired feelingsh leave your body. Young folksh grow old . . . that is, you know what I mean, old folks grow young. Here I've only drank two little glassshes and yet I feel it in all my bonesh. (*Talks big.*) Look at me. Jusht wait; when you and me getsh to drinkin' it every day, we'll grow young again. Now, Mashenka! (*Hugs her.*)

BABA. Hey, you! You've gone daft over it!

MUZHNIK. Huh, have I? You said I an' Potap were wasting the grain, but wha' goo' stuff we've concocted! Hey? Speak! ain't it good?

BABA. Yes, why not, if it makes old folks young? Vish! how gay you are and I feel gay too. Let's have a song! i . . . i . . . i . . . (*Sings.*)

MUZHNIK. 'At's the way! We'll all be young, all be happy!

BABA. We must call your mother, for she's always scolding and complaining. And she must be changed. She will grow young again and be kinder.

MUZHNIK (*Drunk*). Call Mother! call her out here! Eï, you, Mashka! run an' call your grandma and get your granddad to come too. Tell him I want him to get down from the stove and hurry out. We're going to be young! Now hurry! One foot here, 't'other there. Fly! (*The girl runs.*)

MUZHNIK (*To his Wife*). Now le's have anozzer little glassh!

HIRED MAN *draws again and serves.* (MUZHIK *drinks.*) *Firsht we got young above—in our tongsh, then it went to our han'sh and now it's reached my legsh. I jush feel my legsh's younger. Vish, 'ey walk o' themselves. (Begins to dance.)*

BABA (*Drinks*). Come now, Potapushka, you're a master-hand at it, play for us. (POTAP *gets out the bala-läika and strums on it. The PEASANT and his wife dance.*)

HIRED MAN (*Front: plays, laughing and winking toward them. He then ceases playing, but they keep on dancing*). I'll get paid for my crust; these young folks are in the net; they won't get out. Let us have the inspection!

SCENE III

Enter a fresh-faced Old Woman—STARUKHA—and a white-haired Old Man—STARIK—and the others as before.

STARIK. Say, have you gone crazy? What? Everybody's working and here you are dancing!

BABA (*Dances and claps her hands*). Ikh! ikh! ikh! (*Sings as an accompaniment.*) I have sinned before God. God alone is sinless!

STARUKHA. Akh, you wretched creature! The stove isn't 'tended to and yet she's dancing!

MUZHUK. Just you wait, Matushka! See what's happened here at home. We're changing old folks into young ones! Here, take some! Only drink! (*Hands her a glass.*)

STARUKHA. There's plenty of water in the well. (*Smells it.*) What did you put into it? Vish, what a stink!

MUZHUK } Just drink it!
BABA }

STARUKHA (*Tastes*). Ish tui! And it doesn't kill you?

BABA. It gives you new life. You become quite young again.

STARUKHA. Well! (*Drinks*) Oh, it's good! Better nor beer! There now, Batyushka, you take a taste of it. (*The Old Man sits down and shakes his head.*)

HIRED MAN. Let him be! But the babushka ought to have another little glass. (*Offers some to the OLD WOMAN.*)

STARUKHA. Are you sure nothing will happen: Oi, it burns! It makes me thirsty.

BABA. Drink some more! You'll feel how it runs through your veins.

STARUKHA. Well, it seems I must drink it. (*Drinks it down.*)

BABA. Say, has it gone to your legs?

STARUKHA. It's getting there! I feel it here! And how light it makes me! Let me have some more. (*Takes another drink.*) It's great! Why, I have become quite young.

MUZHNIK. That's what I told you.

STARUKHA. Ekh! If only my old man was here! I wish he could see once how young I've become. (*The HIRED MAN plays: PEASANT and his wife dance.*) Is that the way you dance! (*She walks in between them.*) I will show you. (*Dances.*) This way. That way and then this way. Did you ever see it?

STARIK (*Goes to the kettle and lets the liquor flow on the ground*).

MUZHNIK (*Notices this and goes for the Grandfather*). What did you do that for, you wretch? You've let out all that good stuff! Akh, you old dotard! (*Gives him a push and holds his glass under the spigot.*) You've let it all out!

STARIK. It's bad and not good. God produced the grain for you to feed yourself and other men but you have distilled it into a Devil's drink. No good will come of it. Do stop this business. If you don't you'll perish and you'll ruin the people. Do you think this is drink? It is fire; it will burn you. (*Takes a shaving from under the kettle, lights it. The spilt liquor flames up. All stand in horror.*)

Curtain

ACT V

The MUZHNIK's Izba. The HIRED MAN alone, with Horns and Hoofs

SCENE I

HIRED MAN. Lots of grain and nowhere to put it and he's already acquired the taste for it. Now we've been distilling again; we've poured it into a cask and hidden it away from folks. We won't let people drink it for nothing. Whoever's useful to us, we'll let him drink. A little while ago I showed how to get together here some old extortioners and fill them up so they might free him from his dad and not give anything to the old man. To-day my time's up; three years have passed and my job's finished. Let the Starshoï come and inspect it. I'm not ashamed to show it to him.

SCENE II

(Enter the STARSHOÏ from under the earth.)

STARSHOÏ. Well, time's up to-day. Have you earned your crust? I promised you I'd come myself to see. Have you got your work in on the muzhik?

HIRED MAN. That I have to a T. Judge for yourself. They'll be here very shortly. Sit down in the stove and see what they'll be doing. You'll be satisfied.

STARSHOÏ *(Crawls into the stove)*. Let us see!

SCENE III

(Enter the FARMER and four ELDERS followed by the FARMER'S WIFE. They take seats at the table. The

THE FIRST DISTILLER

BABA *puts a cloth on the table and places on it jelly and cakes (pirogi). The ELDERS exchange greetings with the HIRED MAN.*)

FIRST ELDER. Well, have you made a lot more of the drink?

HIRED MAN. Yes, as much as we need. What's the use of wasting it?

SECOND ELDER. Did it come out well?

HIRED MAN. Even better than the other.

SECOND ELDER. And where did you learn about it?

HIRED MAN. You travel about the world and learn everything.

THIRD ELDER. Ay, ay, ripe—doshlui!

MUZHNIK. Fall to! (*His Wife serves.*)

BABA (*Brings decanter, fills the glasses*). We beg your indulgence!

FIRST ELDER (*Drinks*). To your health! Akh it's good! It goes to all my joints. Now, join me! (*The three ELDERS do the same, one after the other.*)

(*STARSHOI crawls through the peep-hole of the stove; the HIRED MAN takes his place next him.*)'

HIRED MAN (*To the STARSHOI*). Now see what will happen! I will trip up the old woman, she'll spill the glass. He didn't make any fuss about the crust—look now what the little glass of liquor will do!

MUZHNIK. Now, Baba, fill 'em up again, take 'em in turn: the old *kum*, then Uncle Mikhaïlo.

BABA (*Takes the full decanter and goes around the table; the HIRED MAN sticks out his leg, she stumbles over it and spills the glass*). Aï! Batyushki I spilt it!—The Deuce brought you here!

MUZHNIK (*To his Wife*). What a butter-fingered Devil you are! You might as well not have any hands and you say things against people! Ish! the precious stuff you spilt on the floor!

BABA. But I didn't mean to!

MUZHNIK. "Didn't mean to" nothing! Here, let me get up and I'll teach you how to spill liquor on the

ground! (*To the HIRED MAN*) And you, damned fool, what are you hanging round the table for? Go to the Devil!

(*The Woman fills the glasses again.*)

HIRED MAN (*Goes to the stove and speaks to the STARSHOI.*) You see: the other time, he didn't complain about his last bit of bread but now just for a little glass of liquor he almost struck his wife and he told me to go to you,—to the Devil!

STARSHOI. Good, very good! I commend you!

HIRED MAN. Wait a bit longer! Just let 'em drink up the whole bottle and then see what will happen. Just now they are talking smooth oily words but in a few minutes they'll all begin to pretend friendship for each other and will try to get the best of each other like sly foxes.

MUZHNIK. Now tell me, my good old friendsh, how are you going to decide my affairs. Granddad lived with me and I took care of him, shupported him but now he's gone to Uncle's and wantsh to take his share in the home here and give it to Uncle. Decide what is besht. You are men of sense. If it weren't for you, 'twould be as if we had no headsh. Why there's no men in the village to be compared with you. F'rinshtance, here's Ivan Fyodotuitch—why folksh say he's our firsh' shitizen; and I'll tell you the truth, Ivan Fyodotuitch, I love you moren' my father 'n mother. An' Mikhaïla Stepanuitch's my ol'esh' friend.

FIRST ELDER (*To the Host*). It's good even to talk with a good man—y'acquire sense. It's so wiz you. Y' won't find another man like you!

SECOND ELDER. 'Cause y'are sensible an' frien'ly; zat's why I love you.

THIRD ELDER. I hain't wordsh to tell you how fond I be of you!

FOURTH ELDER. A frien', truly a frien'.

HIRED MAN (*Nudges the STARSHOI*). You'll see! They're telling lies all the time. Get 'em away, then they'll curse each other out. But now you see they have

axes to grind—they're smooth as butter—they're foxes wagging their tails! And it's all from the drink!

STARSHOI. It's a fine drink! Very fine! If they will lie like that, they'll all be ours. Good, I commend you!

HIRED MAN. Wait, let 'em drink another bottle and there'll be some more fun!

BABA (*Offers more*). Drink for your health's sake.

FIRST ELDER. Ain't it too much? Here'sh to your health! (*Drinks.*) Sure 'tis a compliment to drink with a good man.

SECOND ELDER. One hash to drink! to the health of our hosh and hoshtess!

THIRD ELDER. Goo' friends, here'sh to your health!

FOURTH ELDER. Here's brew for you! Drink her down! We'll finish the whole biz! Coz my will rulesh.

FIRST ELDER. Not your will at all, but as those older nor you says!

FOURTH ELDER. Older but stupider. Get you gone where you came from!

SECOND ELDER. What are you scolding about? Ekh, you're a fool!

THIRD ELDER. He knows what he's shaying. 'Cause our host ain't treating us for nothing. He's got something up his sleeve. We can decide the matter for him. You just treat us. Toady to us! 'Cause you need me, don't signify I need you. You're brother to a hog!

MUZHUK. You think you know something, don't you! What you splittin' your throat for? D'y'ever see anything like it? Healthy goromdizers 's what you are!

FIRST ELDER. What makes you swell up so? I'll knock your nose crosswise!

MUZHUK. Who'll do what?

SECOND ELDER. What a marvel! Go to the Devil! I don't want to talk wiz you! I'm going off.

MUZHUK (*Holds him back*). Now wha' you want to break up th' comp'ny for?

SECOND ELDER. Lemme go! I'll hit you!

MUZHUK. I won't let you go! What right have you?

SECOND ELDER. Well, this! (*Strikes him.*)

MUZHUK (*To the ELDERS*). Help! (*Scrimmage. The MUZHUK and the ELDERS all talk at once in a medley.*)

FIRST ELDER. 'Cause o'course, we're havin' a shela-bration.

SECOND ELDER. I c'n do ever'thing.

THIRD ELDER. Give us s'more!

MUZHUK (*Yells to his Wife*). Get anoizzer bodl! (*All sit down at the table and drink.*)

HIRED MAN (*To the STARSHOI*). Have you seen it now? The wolf's blood tells in them. They are all as bad as wolves.

STARSHOI. Fine drink! I compliment you.

HIRED MAN. Wait! let 'em have their third bottle and there'll be some more.

Curtain.

ACT VI

The Stage represents a Street. At the Right Old Men are seated on joists, the GRANDFATHER between them. In the Center Women, Girls and Young Men are dancing Khorovods. A Choral Dance is played and executed. From the Izba are heard an uproar, drunken shouts. Exit an ELDER and yells in a tipsy voice; he is followed by the FARMER who tries to pull him back.

SCENE I

GRANDFATHER. Akh, what sins, what sins! Why was anything else needed? Work all the week; the holiday comes: wash up, mend the harness, get a little rest, go into the street where the Elders are, discuss public affairs. While as for the young folks, let them play together! Now there they're having a fine time; it's a gay sight. It's decent, it's fine! (*Yell from the izba.*) But listen to that! They only annoy people and make the Devil rejoice! And it all comes from dissipation!

SCENE II

(A crowd of drunken men rush from the Izba, they make for the Khorovod-party, shouting, and seizing the Girls.)

GIRLS. Let me go, Uncle Karp! What's got into you?

YOUTHS. We must go to the side street. We can't play here any more.

(All exeunt, except the Drunken Men and the GRANDFATHER.)

MUZHİK (*Goes up to his Father and makes a contemptuous Gesture*). Well, did you get it? The Elders have agreed to give it all to me. That's what comes to you! Na! Swallow it! They've given it all to me, and nothing to you! That's what they'll say.

(FIRST, SECOND, THIRD and FOURTH ELDER all speaking at once.)

FIRST ELDER	}	'Cause I can decide the whole truth!
SECOND ELDER		I always argue the best of anyone, 'cause I know how to defend myself! ¹
THIRD ELDER	}	Friend, dear Friend, dearest friend!
FOURTH ELDER		Izba run, stove run away, there's no place for the mistress to stay!

(*The ELDERS grab hold of one another and walk off in couples staggering, first one couple, then another. The MUZHİK starts for his house, but before he gets there, stumbles, tumbles and mumbles something incomprehensible like the grunting of a pig. The GRANDFATHER and the MUZHİKS get up and exeunt.*)

SCENE III

(*The STARSHOÏ comes forward with the HIRED MAN.*)

HIRED MAN. Did you see? Now the swine's blood begins to speak. They were changed from wolves to pigs. (*Points to the MUZHİK.*) There he lies in the mud like a boar and grunts.

STARSHOÏ. He's got his deserts. They became first like foxes, then like wolves, now like swine. Well, that's some drink! Tell me, how did you make such a drink? You must have mixt in the blood of foxes, wolves and pigs, didn't you?

¹ Ya sam s usami; literally: "I have whiskers."

HIRED MAN. No, all I did was to raise a little too much grain. While he had only as much grain as he needed he made no fuss about his crust; but as soon as he began to have more than he had room for the fox, wolf and pig blood showed itself in him. The beast blood was always in him, only it didn't show.

STARSHOI. Well, my clever fellow, you've earned your crust! If now they will only keep on drinking the liquor, they will always be in our hands!

Curtain.

THE FRUITS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

PERSONAGES

LEONÍD FEÓDOROVITCH ZVYEZDINTSEF:¹ A retired lieutenant of horse-guards, the possessor of twenty-four thousand desyatins of land in various governments; a ruddy man of about sixty, an easy-going, agreeable gentleman. Believes in spiritism, and likes to surprise others with his tales.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA ZVYEZDÍNTSEVA: His wife, a stout youngish woman, absorbed in social functions, despising her husband and blindly believing her doctor; an irritable woman.

BETSY: Their daughter, a society girl of twenty, with free and easy manners, affectedly masculine; she wears a pince-nez. Coquettish and fond of laughing. Speaks very rapidly, and very precisely, compressing her lips like a foreigner.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH: Their son, twenty-five years old, a graduate of the law school; without definite occupation; a member of a bicycle club, of a jockey club, and a club for breeding greyhounds. A young man, enjoying excellent health and of unbounded self-confidence. Talks loudly and abruptly. Some times he is very serious, almost glum; then again boisterously gay and laughs noisily.

PROFESSOR ALEKSEÍ VLADÍMIROVITCH KRUGOSVETLOF: A scientific gentleman of fifty, with calm, agreeable, self-confident manners, and a drawling, singsong way of speaking. A great talker. Those that do not agree with him he treats with gentle scorn. He smokes continually. A thin, lively man.

THE DOCTOR: Forty years old; healthy, stout, ruddy man; loud-voiced and bluff. He keeps up a self-satisfied smile.

MARYA KONSTANTÍNOVA: A young lady of twenty, a pupil at the Conservatory, a music-teacher with bangs on her forehead, in an exaggeratedly stylish toilet; very ingratiating; blushes easily.

PETRISHCHEF: Twenty-eight years old; a graduate in philological studies seeking for a position; a member of the same societies as VASILI LEONIDUITCH, and also of a Society for the Arrangement of Print and Calico Balls. Bald, quick in his movements and speech, and very courteous.

THE BARONESS: A woman of importance; fifty years old; stolid, speaks without intonations.

¹ *Zvezdina*, the star on a horse's forehead, from *zyvezdá*, a star.

THE PRINCESS: A society lady; a visitor.

THE YOUNG PRINCESS: a society girl; she grimaces; a visitor.

THE COUNTESS: A country lady, who moves with great difficulty; she has false teeth and curls.

GROSSMANN: A dark-complexioned man, of Jewish type; very lively and nervous; speaks very loud.

MARYA VASÍLYEVNA TOLBÚKHINA: A stout lady; very distinguished, rich, and good-natured; acquainted with all the celebrities of the past and present. Very stout; speaks rapidly, trying to out-talk the others. She smokes.

BARON KLINGEL (Kokò): A graduate of Petersburg University; a Kammer-yunker, attached to the embassy; perfectly correct and therefore tranquil in mind and quietly gay.

A LADY.

A BARUINYA (who does not speak).

SAKHÁTOF SERGYEÏ IVÁNOVITCH: Fifty years old; a former member of the ministry; an elegant gentleman of broad European culture, without occupation and interested in everything. Holds himself with dignity and even with some reserve.

FEÓDOR IVANUITCH: A *Valet de Chambre*, about sixty; a cultivated man loving culture, making excessive use of eye-glasses and handkerchief, which he slowly unfolds. Follows politics. An intellectual and excellent man.

GRIGORI: A lackey, twenty-eight years old; a handsome fellow, disolute, spiteful, and audacious.

YAKOF: The butler, forty years old; bustling, good-natured, living only for the interest of his family in the country.

SEMYÓN (Sioma, Siomka): Butler's assistant, twenty years old; a healthy, fresh, country lad, light-complexioned; without a beard as yet, calm and smiling.

COACHMAN: Thirty-five years old, with mustache only; gruff and decided.

THE OLD COOK: Forty-five years old; ragged, unshaven, bloated, sallow, trembly; dressed in a torn nankeen summer paletot and dirty trousers, in braces. His words are spoken hoarsely as if he had an impediment in his speech.

THE COOK: A chatterer; discontented, thirty years old.

THE SWISS: A retired soldier.

TANYA: The chambermaid, nineteen years old; an energetic, strong, jolly girl of changeable moods. In moments of strong emotion she squeals with delight.

FIRST MUZHIK: Sixty years old; has acted as starshina or headman;

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supposes that he understands intercourse with gentlemen, and loves to hear himself.

SECOND MUZHIK: Forty-five years old; master of his own house, gruff and outspoken; does not like to speak. SEYMON's father.

THIRD MUZHIK: Seventy years old, in *lapti* or bark shoes; nervous, restless, quick in his motions; shy but hides his shyness by talking.

THE FIRST FOOTMAN TO THE COUNTESS: An old man of the old régime, pride characteristic of a lackey.

THE SECOND FOOTMAN: Huge, healthy, rude.

ERRAND-BOY: From a shop; wears a blue *poddyovka*, or sleeveless jacket, has a clean, ruddy face. Speaks distinctly, suggestively, and clearly.

[*The action takes place at the Capitol in the house of the ZVYEZDINTSEFS.*]

THE FRUITS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

(1889)

ACT I

The stage represents the anteroom of a wealthy house in Moscow. Three doors; the outside door, the one leading into LEONID FEODOROVITCH'S private room, and the one leading into VASILY LEONIDUITCH'S room. A staircase leading up to the interior chambers; behind it an entrance to the butler's pantry.

SCENE I

GRIGORI (*a young and handsome lackey, looks at himself in the mirror and prinks*)

GRIGORI. Too bad about my mustaches! "Mustaches," says she, "are not suitable for a lackey." Why not, pray? So that it may be evident that you are a lackey! Otherwise how would one fail to excel her favorite son! What's he? Even without mustaches one could get ahead of him. . . . (*Looks at himself with a smile.*) And how many of them have run after me! But no one pleases me like this Tanya here! . . . A simple chamber-maid. That's true, but she's nicer than the young lady (*smiles*), and she's pretty. (*Listens.*) Here she comes. (*Smiles.*) Just hear how she taps with her little heels. . . . v-va!

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SCENE II

GRIGORI and TANYA (*with a fur cloak and shoes*)

GRIGORI. My respects to Tatyana Markovna!

TANYA. Tell me, are you always looking at yourself? Do you imagine you're very handsome?

GRIGORI. Well, am I not good-looking?

TANYA. So-so . . . neither good-looking nor ill-looking, but betwixt and between. But why are all these shubas hanging up here?

GRIGORI. I shall immediately remove them, young lady. (*He takes a shuba and wraps it round TANYA, at the same time hugging her.*) Tanya, what shall I say to you? . . .

TANYA. Get away! What do you mean by such conduct? (*Angrily tears herself out of his arms.*) I say . . . let me be!

GRIGORI (*glancing round*). Give me a kiss!

TANYA. What are you thinking about? I'll kiss you this way! . . . (*Threatens him with her hand.*)

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. (*A bell is heard behind the scenes, and then a voice.*) Grigori!

TANYA. There, go! Vasily Leoniduitch is calling.

GRIGORI. Let him wait! He's only just opened his eyes. Listen, now! why don't you love me?

TANYA. Great notion you have of loving. I don't love any one.

GRIGORI. That's not true! You love Siomka! You've found a fine kind of fellow—a butler's dirty-pawed muzhik.

TANYA. Well, whatever he is, you're jealous of him.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH (*behind the scenes*). Grigori!!

GRIGORI. You're in a hurry! . . . There's something to be jealous about! Here you are beginning to grow cultivated and you take up with such a fellow! It would be different if you were in love with me. . . . Tanya . . .

TANYA (*angrily and severely*). I tell you it's none of your business.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH (*behind the scenes*). Grigori!!!

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GRIGORI. You behave mighty severe!

VASILY LEONIDUITCH (*behind the scenes; calls persistently, monotonously, at the top of his voice*). Grigori! Grigori! Grigori!

(TANYA and GRIGORI *laugh*.)

GRIGORI. Such nice girls have been in love with me! (*Bell.*)

TANYA. Well, go to him, and let me be!

GRIGORI. You are dull, I see. Why, I'm not Semyon!

TANYA. Semyon wants to marry and doesn't care for nonsense.

SCENE III

GRIGORI, TANYA, and ERRAND-BOY

ERRAND-BOY (*brings a great pasteboard box with a gown*). Good-morning.

GRIGORI. How are you? Who from?

ERRAND-BOY. From Bourdier, a gown, and here's a note for the lady.

TANYA (*takes the note*). Sit down; I will deliver it. (*Exit.*)

SCENE IV

GRIGORI, the ERRAND-BOY, and VASILY LEONIDUITCH

VASILY LEONIDUITCH (*puts his head out of the door; he is in shirt-sleeves and slippers.*) Grigori.

GRIGORI. Presently.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Grigori! Can't you hear?

GRIGORI. I've only just come.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Warm water and tea.

GRIGORI. Semyon will bring them immediately.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. What is that? From Bourdier?

ERRAND-BOY. That's just what it is!

(VASILI LEONIDUITCH and GRIGORI *exeunt*. *Bell.*)

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SCENE V

ERRAND-BOY *and* TANYA

TANYA (*runs to answer the bell and opens the door; To the ERRAND-BOY*). Wait!

ERRAND-BOY. That's just what I'm doing.

SCENE VI

ERRAND-BOY, TANYA, *and* SAKHATOF (*who enters*)

TANYA. Excuse me, the lackey just went out. If you please, permit me. (*Takes his shuba.*)

SAKHATOF (*adjusting his dress*). Is Leonid Feodorovitch at home? Is he up? (*Bell.*)

TANYA. Certainly, long ago!

SCENE VII

ERRAND-BOY, TANYA, *and* SAKHATOF. *The DOCTOR enters. Looks round for the lackey. Sees SAKHATOF*

DOCTOR (*deferentially*). Ah! my respects to you!

SAKHATOF (*gazes fixedly*). The doctor, I believe?

DOCTOR. I thought you were abroad. Have you come to see Leonid Feodorovitch?

SAKHATOF. Yes! And what brings you? Any one sick?

DOCTOR (*smiling*). Not exactly sick, but you know . . . with these fine ladies there's always trouble. She sits up over her whist every night till three o'clock, and takes an occasional glass. Then she's fat and stout, and she's pretty well along in years.

SAKHATOF. Do you give Anna Pavlovna the benefit of your diagnosis this way? She wouldn't be pleased, I imagine.

DOCTOR (*laughing*). Well, it's true. They all keep up these tricks, and then comes lesion of the digestive organs,

pressure on the liver, . . . nervous. . . . Well, then she writes for you and you have to prescribe. Too bad about them. (*Smiles.*) But how are you? So you are also a spiritualist, are you?

SAKHATOF. I? No, I'm not a spiritualist, also! . . . Well, my respects to you. (*Starts to go, but the DOCTOR detains him.*)

DOCTOR. No, I don't entirely deny it when such a man as Krugosvetlof takes stock in it. It's impossible . . . a professor, of European celebrity! There must be something in it. I should like to see something, but I never have the chance; I have other fish to fry.

SAKHATOF. Yes, yes. My respects to you.
(*Exit with a slight bow.*)

DOCTOR (*to TANYA*). Is she up yet?

TANYA. She's in her bedroom. Will you go in?

(SAKHATOF and the DOCTOR go out by different doors.)

SCENE VIII

ERRAND-BOY, TANYA, and FEODOR IVANUITCH

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*enters with a newspaper in his hands; to the ERRAND-BOY*). What do you want?

ERRAND-BOY. I'm from Bourdier with a gown and a note. I was told to wait.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Oh, from Bourdier. (*To TANYA.*) Who was it came?

TANYA. Sakhatof Sergyeï Ivanuitch and the doctor. They stopped here and talked a little while about spiritichism.

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*correcting her*). About spiritualism.

TANYA. Yes, that's what I said; about spiritichism. And did you hear, Feodor Ivanuitch, how well it went last time? (*Laughs.*) There were raps and things flew around.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. And how did you know?

TANYA. Well, Lizavieta Leonidovna said so.

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SCENE IX

TANYA, FEODOR IVANUITCH, *the* ERRAND-BOY, and YAKOF
the butler

YAKOF (*comes running in with a glass of tea; to the* ERRAND-BOY). How are you?

ERRAND-BOY (*gloomily*). How are you?

(YAKOF *knocks at* VASILY LEONIDUITCH's door.)

SCENE X

The Same, and GRIGORI

GRIGORI. Give it here.

YAKOF. Yesterday's glasses have not yet been returned or the tray from Vasily Leoniduitch. I have been asked for them.

GRIGORI. The tray is in his room with cigars.

YAKOF. Then put them somewhere else. You see they ask me for it.

GRIGORI. I'll bring it. I'll bring it.

YAKOF. You say you'll bring it, but it doesn't come. The other day they were wanting it, but it was nowhere to be found.

GRIGORI. I'll bring it, I tell you. What a fuss!

YAKOF. It's well for you to say so; but here for two whole days with me, it's "serve tea" and "get breakfast ready." You're kept on the jump, on the jump, all the day's day. Who in the house has more to do than I have? And always in the wrong!

GRIGORI. Who has better work? . . . How fine you are!

TANYA. To you all are in the wrong except your self. . . .

GRIGORI (*to* TANYA). No one asked you to speak!
(*Exit.*)

SCENE XI

TANYA, YAKOF, FEODOR IVANUITCH *and the*
ERRAND-BOY

YAKOF. Well, I'm not offended. . . . Tatyana Makarovna, didn't the baruinya say something about last evening's performance?

TANYA. That about the lamp, you mean?

YAKOF. And how it was torn out of my hands, only God knows! I had just started to wipe it, had scarcely taken it up, when somehow it slipped out . . . in little bits of pieces. Just my bad luck! It's all right for him, for Grigori Mikhailuitch, to talk, since he's a single man; but when one has a family . . . one must think about things and furnish provisions. But I don't look at the work. So she didn't say a word? Well, glory to God for that! . . . How many spoons have you, Feodor Ivanuitch—one or two?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. One, one! (*Reads the paper.*)
(*Exit YAKOF.*)

SCENE XII

TANYA, FEODOR IVANUITCH, *and the* ERRAND-BOY

(*A bell is heard. Enter GRIGORI with a tray and the SWISS.*)

THE SWISS (*to GRIGORI*). Announce to the barin² some peasants from the country.

GRIGORI (*points to FEODOR IVANUITCH*). Give your errand to the steward; I have no time. (*Exit.*)

²Barin means nobleman or gentleman; baruinya is the corresponding term for a married lady; baruishnya for an unmarried lady; a barsky dvor is any seigniorial residence.—Tr.

SCENE XIII

TANYA, FEODOR IVANUITCH, *the SWISS, and the*
ERRAND-BOY

TANYA. Where are the muzhiks from?

THE SWISS. From Kursk, I think.

TANYA (*squeals*). They! oh, it must be Semyon's father about the land! I'll go and meet them.
(*Exit, running.*)

SCENE XIV

FEODOR IVANUITCH, *the SWISS, and the* ERRAND-BOY

THE SWISS. Tell me; shall I admit them, or what? They say they've come about the land, the barin knows.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Yes, about buying some land. Yes, yes. He has company just now. This is what you must do; tell them to wait.

THE SWISS. Where shall they wait?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Let them wait in the courtyard; I will send for them.
(*Exit SWISS.*)

SCENE XV

FEODOR IVANUITCH, TANYA, *behind her* THREE MUZHIKS,
GRIGORI, *and the* ERRAND-BOY

TANYA. To the right. This way, this way!

FEODOR IVANUITCH. I did not order them to be admitted here.

GRIGORI. She's flighty!

TANYA. No matter, Feodor Ivanuitch, they'll wait here at one side.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Their feet will soil the floor.³

TANYA. They have wiped their feet, and I'll brush up after them. (*To the muzhiks.*) You stand here.

³ All expressed in one word in Russian, *natapchut*.

(The muzhiks enter, carrying presents in their handkerchiefs, cakes, eggs, towels. They look for the ikons, to cross themselves. They cross themselves toward the stairs, bow low before FEODOR IVANUITCH, and range themselves stiffly.)

GRIGORI *(to FEODOR IVANUITCH)*. Feodor Ivanuitch, they say that Pironnet's gaiters are all the style; but what could be better than what that man's got on! *(Points to the THIRD MUZHIK, who wears felt chungis.)*

FEODOR IVANUITCH. All you can do is to be always laughing at people! *(Exit GRIGORI.)*

SCENE XVI

TANYA, FEODOR IVANUITCH, *and the* THREE MUZHIKS

FEODOR IVANUITCH *(gets up and goes to the muzhiks)*. So you are from Kursk, are you, and come to see about buying the land?

FIRST MUZHIK. That's right. We came, for instance, to finish up about the sale of it. How, could we be announced?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Yes, yes. I know, I know. You wait here; I will announce you immediately. *(Exit.)*

SCENE XVII

TANYA *and the* THREE MUZHIKS. VASILY LEONIDUITCH *behind the scenes*

(The muzhiks look round and know not what to do with their gifts.)

FIRST MUZHIK. What is the thing—I mean what do you call what you hand things on? Something to make a think look like something. What is it? a platter?

TANYA. Wait a minute, wait a minute! Give them to me; for the time being let them lie here. *(Lays them on the settee.)*

FIRST MUZHIK. What do you call that man, that respectable gentleman who just came up to us?

TANYA. That's the Kammerdien.

FIRST MUZHIK. That's simple—Kamardin. Employed here . . . (*To TANYA.*) And you, are you a servant too?

TANYA. I'm one of the chambermaids. I'm also from Demen. You see I know you, and I know *you*, too; but that old uncle I don't know. (*Points to the THIRD MUZHIK.*)

THIRD MUZHIK. You know their names, but you don't know mine?

TANYA. You are Yefim Antonuitch.

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely! ⁴

TANYA. And you are Semyon's father, Zakhar Trifonuitch.

SECOND MUZHIK. That's right!

THIRD MUZHIK. And I, we will say, am Mitri Chilikin. Will you know now?

TANYA. Now we shall be able to call you by name.

SECOND MUZHIK. And whose daughter may you be?

TANYA. I'm Aksinya's daughter; my father was a soldier, but he's dead.

FIRST MUZHIK } (*in surprise*). Indeed!

THIRD MUZHIK }

SECOND MUZHIK. There's some reason in the saying:—

"Pay a groat
For a shoat,
Feed it high
On the rye,
And then 'twill swell
Very well!"

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely! Just exactly like a mamsell!

THIRD MUZHIK. That's so! O Lord!

VASILY LEONIDUITCH (*behind the scene, rings and then calls*). Grigori! Grigori!

FIRST MUZHIK. Who is it making such a fuss in there, for example?

TANYA. That's the young barin.

⁴He says *dvistitel'no* for *dyeistvitel'no*.

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THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord! I said we'd better wait outside. (*Silence.*)

SECOND MUZHIK. Are you the one Semyon wants to marry?

TANYA. So he wrote, did he? (*Covers her face with her apron.*)

SECOND MUZHIK. Of course he wrote. What a crazy notion he's got! I see the lad has been getting spoiled.

TANYA (*with spirit*). No! He hasn't been getting spoiled at all. Shall I send him to you?

SECOND MUZHIK. Why send him? There's plenty of time; we're in no hurry.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH (*is heard crying in despair*). Grigori! The devil take you!

SCENE XVIII

The Same, and VASILY LEONIDUITCH (at the door in his shirt-sleeves and putting on his pince-nez)

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Are you all dead?

TANYA. He's not here, Vasili Leoniduitch. . . . I'll send him immediately. (*Goes toward the door.*)

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. I heard some one talking! What sort of scarecrows are these? What?

TANYA. These are muzhiks from the Kursk village, Vasili Leoniduitch.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH (*looking at the errand-boy*). And who's this? Oh, yes, the Errand-boy from Bourdier.

(*The peasants bow low. VASILY LEONIDUITCH pays no attention to them. GRIGORI meets TANYA at the door. TANYA pauses.*)

SCENE XIX

The Same, and GRIGORI

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. I told you . . . the other shoes! I can't wear these.

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GRIGORI. But the others are right there.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Where are they?

GRIGORI. Why, there.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. You lie!

GRIGORI. Come! you'll see.

(VASILY LEONIDUITCH and GRIGORI *exeunt*.)

SCENE XX

TANYA, *the* THREE MUZHIKS, *and the* ERRAND-BOY

THIRD MUZHIK. I say, maybe now ain't the right time; perhaps we'd better go to our lodgings⁵ and wait there till it's time.

TANYA. No, it's all right; you wait. Here, I'll bring you plates for your presents. (Exit.)

SCENE XXI

The Same, SAKHATOF, LEONID FEODOROVITCH, *and behind them* FEODOR IVANUITCH

(*The muzhiks bring their presents and take their positions.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*to the muzhiks*). Presently, presently, just wait. (*Indicating the errand-boy.*) Who is this?

THE ERRAND-BOY. From Bourdier.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Oh, from Bourdier!

SAKHATOF (*smiling*). Oh, I don't deny it; but you'll agree that those of us, the unenlightened, who don't witness all these things you tell about, find it hard to believe them.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. You say, "I can't believe." But we don't demand belief. We demand investigation. Why! I can't help believing in this ring. This ring was brought to me *from there!*

⁵ *Fatera*, colloquial, quarters.

SAKHATOF. What do you mean "from there"? From where?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. From the other world! Yes.

SAKHATOF (*smiling*). Very interesting, very interesting.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. But let us suppose you think that I'm a man carried away by enthusiasms, who imagines to himself what does not exist; but here's Aleksei Vladimirovitch Krugosvetlof, he's certainly no ordinary person, but a professor, and he recognizes it. Nor is he the only one. There's Crookes. There's Wallace.

SAKHATOF. But you see I don't deny it. I only say it's very interesting. Interesting to know how Krugosvyetlof explains it.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. He has his theory. But you just come this evening. He will undoubtedly be there. But chiefly Grossmann will be there. . . . You know the celebrated mind-reader.

SAKHATOF. Yes, I have heard about him, but haven't yet had a chance to see him.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Well, do come. First Grossmann, and then Kapchitch, and our mediumistic séance . . . (*to FEODOR IVANUITCH*) Hasn't the messenger from Kapchitch come back yet?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Not yet.

SAKHATOF. How should I know, then?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Come anyway, it doesn't make any difference . . . Come! If Kapchitch isn't there, we'll find our own medium. Marya Ignatyevna is a medium; not so strong as Kapchitch, but good enough.

SCENE XXII

The Same, and TANYA who enters with plates for the presents. She listens to the conversation

SAKHATOF (*smiles*). Yes, yes; but here's one circumstance; why are mediums always from the so-called cultivated circle? Both Kapchitch and Marya Igna-

tyevna. If this is a peculiar force, then surely we ought to find it everywhere among the people, among the muzhiks.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. And so we do! It so often happens that we have one muzhik and he has proved to be a medium. One day we called him during the time of a séance—a divan had to be moved—and we forgot all about him. He also had apparently gone into a trance. And just imagine: our séance was at an end, Kapchitch had come out of his trance, and suddenly we noticed that at the other end of the room near where the muzhik was mediumistic phenomena were beginning to manifest themselves; a table moved and started to walk.

TANYA (*aside*). That was when I crept out from under the table.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Evidently he is also a medium—the more so that he looks very much like Home. . . . Do you remember Home? . . . light-complexioned, naïve!

SAKHATOF (*shrugging his shoulders*). Indeed. This is very interesting. So, then, you would experiment on him, I suppose.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. And we shall. But he's not the only one. There are lots of mediums. Only we don't know them. Why, only the other day an old woman who was sick moved a stone wall.

SAKHATOF. Moved a stone wall?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Yes, yes! She was lying in bed, and did not have the slightest idea that she was a medium. She leaned her hand on the wall and the wall moved.

SAKHATOF. And it did not fall down?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. No, it did not fall down.

SAKHATOF. Strange! . . . Well, I'll come this evening.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Come, do come! We'll have the séance in any event.

(SAKHATOF *puts on his coat*. LEONID FEODOROVITCH *shows him out*.)

SCENE XXIII

The Same, without SAKHATOF

ERRAND-BOY (*to TANYA*). Do announce me to the baruinya! Do you expect me to spend the night here?

TANYA. Wait! She is going to drive with the young lady; they'll be coming very soon now. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XXIV

The Same, without TANYA

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*approaches the muzhiks, who bow and present their gifts*). That is not necessary.

FIRST MUZHIK (*smiling*). This comes as our first duty. It's what the commune bade us do.

SECOND MUZHIK. This is the way it's usually managed.

THIRD MUZHIK. Don't speak about it, because we're very happy to do it. . . . As our fathers, I say, served your fathers, so we wish, I say, with all our hearts, to do the same. . . . (*Bows low.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. But who are you? What is it exactly that you want?

FIRST MUZHIK. We have come to your grace, of course.

SCENE XXV

The Same, and PETRISHCHEF

PETRISHCHEF (*comes in hastily, wearing a great-coat*). Is Vasili Leoniduitch awake yet? (*Seeing LEONID FEODOROVITCH, he nods to him.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Have you come to see my son?

PETRISHCHEF. I—I want to see Vovò for a little minute.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Go in, go in!

(PETRISHCHEF *takes off his overcoat and quickly goes up.*)

SCENE XXVI

The Same, without PETRISHCHEF

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*To the muzhiks*). Well, now what do you want?

SECOND MUZHIK. Accept our presents.

FIRST MUZHIK (*smiling*). That is, the offering from the village.

THIRD MUZHIK. And don't mention it: it's no consequence. Our wishes to you as to our own father. And don't mention it.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Very good—Feodor, take them.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, give them here. (*Takes the presents.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Now what is the trouble?

FIRST MUZHIK. Well, we've come to your grace.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. I see you have come to me; but what do you want.

FIRST MUZHIK. To take steps about completing the purchase of the land. It comes to this that. . . .

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Well, are you going to buy the land?

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, this is the way of it. It comes to this that. . . . Of course we want to buy the land for our own. So the mir empowered us, for example, to get it through the Imperial Bank, as is customary, by affixing a stamp of the prescribed amount.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. That is, you wish to buy some land by means of the bank—that's it, is it?

FIRST MUZHIK. That is as you proposed to us last summer. It comes to this, of course, that the whole sum complete amounts to 32,864 rubles to make the land ours.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. That's right: but how about the payment?

FIRST MUZHIK. Well, the mir proposes, as was said last summer, to pay by instalments, according to the law, and four thousand rubles down.

SECOND MUZHIK. You'll receive four thousand in cash now, that is, and the rest you'll wait for.

THIRD MUZHIK (*while he unrolls the money*). You needn't fear, we'll pledge ourselves, and we won't do nothing. I should say we won't do something, that is, anything—in other words—we'll do as we ought.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Well, you see, I wrote you that I would agree to it only on condition you put up all the money.

FIRST MUZHIK. That reely would be pleasanter, but you see it's impossible.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. What's to be done, then?

FIRST MUZHIK. The mir, for example, expected to do as you proposed last summer in regard to postponing the payments. . . .

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. That was last year. Then I agreed to it; but now I can't. . . .

SECOND MUZHIK. But how is that? We depended on it—we have prepared the document and got the money.

THIRD MUZHIK. Have pity on us, father. We have so little land—scarcely room to keep cattle, or even a hen. (*He bows.*) Don't be hard on us, father. (*He bows.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. It is true, and I'll admit it, that last year I agreed to wait, but now circumstances have changed. . . . So that now it is inconvenient for me.

SECOND MUZHIK. It is impossible for us to get along without this land.

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, without land we can't live; we are ruined.

THIRD MUZHIK (*bows*). Father! We have so little land—really not enough for a cow, I say, or a hen. Father! show your kind heart! Take the money, father!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*who has meantime looked at the paper*). I understand. I should like to do you a favor. You wait. I will give an answer in half an hour. . . . Feodor, tell any one that I'm not receiving.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Very well.

(*Exit LEONID FEODOROVITCH.*)

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SCENE XXVII

The Same, without LEONID FEODOROVITCH. The muzhiks show signs of depression

SECOND MUZHIK. My! What a scrape! Give the whole, says he. But where shall we get it?

FIRST MUZHIK. If he hadn't encouraged us last summer! And that's the reason we reely supposed it would be as was said in the summer.

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord! I was just taking out the money! (*Rolls up the bills again.*) Now what shall we do?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What is your trouble?

FIRST MUZHIK. Our trouble, worthy sir, for instance, lies in this: He proposed last summer to let the payments hang over. The mir went in for it and despatched us; but now, for instance, he proposes that we pay the whole sum at once. And we are unable to do that.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Much money?

FIRST MUZHIK. The whole sum in full means four thousand rubles.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, then! Strain every nerve and get some more.

FIRST MUZHIK. We have got it as well as we could Sir, there ain't no powder in these thoughts.

SECOND MUZHIK. Where people have nothing you can't get it out of them, even by pulling their teeth!

THIRD MUZHIK. We should like with all our hearts to do it, I can tell you; but even if we drove them with a broomstick we couldn't get any more from them.

SCENE XXVIII

*The Same, VASILI LEONIDUITCH and PETRISHCHEF
(at the door, both with cigarettes)*

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. There! I have already said—I will try. I will do the very best I can. Well, what?

PETRISHCHEF. Understand that if you don't get it, the devil only knows how ill it will go with us!

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. But I already have said I will try—and I will. Well, what?

PETRISHCHEF. Nothing. I only say I get it, anyway. I will wait. *(Exit, closing the door.)*

SCENE XXIX

The Same, without PETRISHCHEF

VASILY LEONIDUITCH *(waving his hand)*. The Devil knows what it means. *(The muzhiks bow low. VASILY LEONIDUITCH looks at the ERRAND-BOY. To FEODOR IVANUITCH.)* Why haven't you sent away this fellow from Bourdier's? He seems to have come to live with us entirely. Look at that—he's asleep. What do you say?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, they've delivered the note. . . . They ordered him to wait till Anna Pavlovna should come.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH *(looks at the muzhiks and eyes the money greedily)*. What is that—money? Whom is that for? Is that money for us? *(To FEODOR IVANUITCH)* Who are these men?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. They are peasants from Kursk; they are buying land.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Tell me, is it sold?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Not yet; they haven't come to terms yet. They're very close-fisted.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Ah? . . . We must persuade them. *(To the muzhiks.)* Well, are you going to make your purchase? What?

FIRST MUZHNIK. Reely, we propose as how to get the land into our possession.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Then don't be close-fisted, you know. I will tell you how necessary land is to a good muzhik. Say, it's very necessary, isn't it?

FIRST MUZHNIK. Reely, land is a prime article to a muzhik; that is so.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Well, then, don't be closefisted. Let us see—what land is it? Why, I tell you, you can sow winter-wheat on it in rows; you can get three hun-

dred puds⁶ from it; at a ruble a pud, that makes three hundred rubles. Well, now! Suppose you put in mint? I tell you, you can screw out of it a thousand rubles a desyatin!

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, that's a fact; any one who has the know-how can produce all sorts of products in reality.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Then don't fail to put in mint. You see, I know all about that. That is all printed in books. I will show you. What do you say?

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, all such concerns is plainer to you through books. Brains, of course.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. So you'd better buy it; don't be close-fisted, but hand over your money. (*To FEODOR IVANUITCH.*) Where is papa?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. At home. He asked not to be disturbed for a little.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Well, probably he is consulting the spirits as to whether he shall sell the land or not. Is that so?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. I can't say as to that. I know he was undecided.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. What do you think, Feodor Ivanuitch? Has he any money? Tell me.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. That I don't know. I doubt it. Why do you ask? Didn't you win a tidy little sum at cards last week?

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Well, I spent that for dogs. But now see here: our new society . . . and Petrishchef has been elected . . . and I borrowed some money of Petrishchef, and now I need some for him and for myself. How is it?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What is this new society of yours? Bicycles?

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. No; I'll tell you by and by: it's a new society. I'll say this much, it's a very serious society. And do you know who is the president? What?

⁶ About half a long ton; a pud has 40 Russian, 36.11 avoirdupois, pounds. A desyatin is 2.7 acres.

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FEODOR IVANUITCH. What's the idea of the new club?

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. A Society for the Encouragement of the Breeding of the old Russian Poodle. What? And I will tell you: to-day is the first session and breakfast. But you see I have no money. I'll go to him and try it. (*Goes to the door.*)

SCENE XXX

The MUZHIKS, FEODOR IVANUITCH, and the ERRAND-BOY

FIRST MUZHIK. Who may that be, worthy sir?

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*smiling*). The young barin.

THIRD MUZHIK. The heir, I suppose. O Lord! (*He puts away the money.*) It's best to keep it tight meanwhile.

FIRST MUZHIK. We've been told that he's in the army, a cavalry man for instance.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. No; he is an only son, and so he's free from military obligation.

THIRD MUZHIK. Left at home, I suppose, to support his parents. That is right.

SECOND MUZHIK (*shakes his head*). This one must do it; there's no doubt about it.

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord!

SCENE XXXI

FEODOR IVANUITCH, *the* THREE MUZHIKS, VASILY LEONIDUITCH *and behind them at the door* LEONID FEODOROVITCH.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. That's the way it always is. It's truly remarkable. First you say to me, "Why haven't you some occupation?" and now when I have found something to do and an occupation, and a serious society has been established, with noble aims, then I'm grugged a paltry three hundred rubles. . . .

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LEONID FEODOROVITCH. I have told you that I cannot—and I cannot! I haven't it.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. But here you have been selling land.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. In the first place, I haven't sold it, and chief of all—leave me in peace! You were told that I wasn't to be interrupted. (*Slams the door.*)

SCENE XXXII

The Same, without LEONID FEODOROVITCH

FEODOR IVANUITCH. I told you that now wasn't the time.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. I tell you this is a pretty fix, what? I'll go to mama—my one salvation. He's stark staring mad with his spiritism, and forgets everything. (*Goes upstairs.*)

(FEODOR IVANUITCH *sits down and is just going to read his newspaper.*)

SCENE XXXIII

The Same, BETSY and MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA *come downstairs. Behind them* GRIGORI

BETSY. Is the carriage ready?

GRIGORI. It's coming.

BETSY (*to* MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA). Let us go, let us go! I saw that it was he!

MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA. Who is he?

BETSY. You know very well that it was Petrishchef.

MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA. But where is he?

BETSY. He's with Vovò. You'll see.

MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA. But it may be not he!

(*The MUZHIKS and ERRAND-BOY make low bows.*)

BETSY (*to the* ERRAND-BOY). Well, are you from Bourdier's with the gown?

ERRAND-BOY. I am that. Please let me go.

BETSY. I don't know anything about it; it's mama's affair.

ERRAND-BOY. I can't tell who it's for. I was ordered to bring it to you and to get the money.

BETSY. Well then, wait.

MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA. Is this the costume for the charade?

BETSY. Yes; a charming costume. But mama won't take it, and doesn't want to pay for it.

MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA. Why not?

BETSY. Well, you must ask mama. For Vovò, it's not dear to pay five hundred rubles for a dog, but for a gown to cost one hundred rubles is dear. I can't look like a fright. (*Indicating the muzhiks.*) But who are these?

GRIGORI. Muzhiks, trying to buy some land.

BETSY. Oh, I thought they were huntsmen. Aren't you huntsmen?

FIRST MUZHIK. Not at all, lady. We have come to see Leonid Feodorovitch about completing the purchase of land.

BETSY. How is it? Some huntsmen were to come to Vovò. Are you sure you are not huntsmen? (*The Muzhiks are silent.*) How stupid they are! (*Goes to the door.*) Vovò! (*Laughs.*)

MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA. Why, we just met him.

BETSY. You'd better be hunting for your tongues! . . . Vovò, are you there?

SCENE XXXIV

The Same, and PETRISHCHEF

PETRISHCHEF. Vovò is not there, but I am ready to take his place and do everything required. How do you do? How are you, Marya Konstantinovna! (*Shakes BETSY's hand long and vigorously; then MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA'S.*)

SECOND MUZHIK. Look! just as if he were pumping water.

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BETSY. You can't take his place; still you're better than nothing. (*Laughs.*) What business have you and Vovò on foot?

PETRISHCHEF. Business? Fie-nancial business: that is, our business is fie and at the same time nancial and moreover financial.

BETSY. What does "nancial" mean?

PETRISHCHEF. What a question. That's where the joke lies: it does not mean anything.

BETSY. Then it missed fire, absolutely missed fire. (*Laughs.*)

PETRISHCHEF. It is impossible for a gun to go off every time. It's a kind of an allegri.⁷ Allegri, allegri, and then you may win.

(FEODOR IVANUITCH goes into LEONID FEODOROVITCH'S private room.)

SCENE XXXV

The Same, without FEODOR IVANUITCH

BETSY. Well, that was a blank. But tell me, were you at the Mergasofs' yesterday?

PETRISHCHEF. Not so much at *Mère Gassof's* as at *Père Gassof's*, and not at *Père Gassof's* but at *Fils Gassof's*.

BETSY. You can't get along without a *jeu de mots*. It's a disease. Were the gipsies there also? (*Laughs derisively.*)

PETRISHCHEF (*sings*):—

*Na fartutchkakh pyetushki
Zolatuie grebeshki.*

BETSY. Happy people. And we were bored at Fof's.

PETRISHCHEF (*continues to sing*):—

*I bozhilas i klyalas
Pobuivat' ko mnye. . .*

⁷ *Allegri*, a combination of masquerade and lottery; here "lottery," first and then "blank."

How does it go? What's the rest of it, Marya Konstantinovna?

MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA. *Ko mnye na chas.*⁸

PETRISHCHEF. How is it? How is it, Marya Konstantinovna? (*Laughs.*)

BETSY. *Cessez! vous devenez impossible.*

PETRISHCHEF. *J'ai cessé, j'ai bébé, j'ai dédê.*

BETSY. I see only one means of escaping your witticisms . . . there's no stopping you. Let us go to Vovò's room; besides, he has a guitar. Come, Marya Konstantinovna, come on!

(BETSY, MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA, and PETRISHCHEF go into VASILY LEONIDUITCH'S room.)

SCENE XXXVI

GRIGORI, the THREE MUZHIKS and the ERRAND-BOY

FIRST MUZHIK. Who be them?

GRIGORI. One's the young lady; the other's mamzel—she teaches music.

FIRST MUZHIK. That is, she makes a science of it, does she? And how neat she is! a regular picture.⁹

SECOND MUZHIK. Why don't she marry? She's plenty old enough, I should think.

GRIGORI. Fifteen's the right age, I suppose, as with you.

FIRST MUZHIK. And is that man, for instance, a musician?¹⁰

GRIGORI (*imitating him*). A musician! . . . Can't you get anything through your head?

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, that's our stupidity—our lack of education.

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord!

⁸ On her apron a cock with a golden comb, and she swore and vowed to spend an hour with me.

⁹ *Patret* for *portret*.

¹⁰ The peasant says *iz muzuikanshchikof* instead of *iz muzuikantof*, "one of the musicians."

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(*The sound of gipsy songs with guitar is heard in VASILY LEONIDUITCH'S room.*)

SCENE XXXVII

GRIGORI, *the* THREE MUZHIKS, *the* ERRAND-BOY. *Enter* SEMYON, *followed by* TANYA. TANYA *watches the meeting between father and son.*

GRIGORI (*to* SEMYON). What do you want?

SEMYON. I've been on an errand to Mr. Kapchitch.

GRIGORI. Well, what did he say?

SEMYON. In so many words he told me to say that he could not possibly be there to-night.

GRIGORI. Very well. I'll deliver the message. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XXXVIII

The Same, without GRIGORI

SEMYON (*to his father*). How are you, father? Here's to you, Uncle Yefim—Uncle Mitri. All well at home?

SECOND MUZHIK. How are you, Semyon?

FIRST MUZHIK. How are you, brother?

THIRD MUZHIK. How are you, youngster? Are you all right?

SEMYON (*smiling*). Tell me, batyushka, shall we go and drink a glass of tea?

SECOND MUZHIK. Wait; let us get through our business first. Don't you see we have no time now?

SEMYON. Well, all right. I'll wait for you at the steps. (*He starts to go.*)

TANYA (*runs after him.*) Didn't you say anything?

SEMYON. How could I speak now before folks? Have patience; we'll go and drink our tea, and then I'll tell him. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XXXIX

The Same, without SEMYON. (FEODOR IVANUITCH comes out and sits at the window with his newspaper)

FIRST MUZHIK. Well, will you tell us, worthy sir, how our business is getting along?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Wait a little, he'll be out directly; he will soon be done.

TANYA (*to* FEODOR IVANUITCH). But, Feodor Ivanuitch, how do you know that he will soon be done?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, I know; when he ends the questions, then he reads the questions and answers aloud.

TANYA. Is it true that one can talk with spirits by means of a saucer?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. It may be so.

TANYA. Well, if they tell him to sign, will he really sign?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What do you mean?

TANYA. They don't speak in words, do they?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. By the alphabet. Whatever letter they stop at, he notes it down.

TANYA. Well, and if at a see-ants? . . .

SCENE XL

The Same, and LEONID FEODOROVITCH

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Well, my friends, I cannot do it. I should like to, but I cannot possibly. If you paid all the money down, that would be another thing.

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, that would be better. But the people have small means; and so it's perfectly impossible.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. I cannot, cannot possibly. Here is your paper. I can't sign it.

THIRD MUZHIK. Be merciful, father, show your kind heart.

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SECOND MUZHIK. How can one do so? It's an outrage!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. It's no outrage, friends. Last summer I told you: if you want it, do it. You didn't want to; now I can't.

THIRD MUZHIK. Father! show your kind heart! How can we live now? We have little land. Not enough room for cattle nor even for a hen.

(LEONID FEODOROVITCH goes and stands by the door.)

SCENE XLI

The Same; ANNA PAVLOVNA (baruinya) and the doctor come down. Behind them VASILI LEONIDUITCH, in a gay and sprightly frame of mind, is putting money in his pocketbook.

THE BARUINYA (*tightly laced, with her bonnet on*). So it's to be taken, is it?

THE DOCTOR. If the symptoms are repeated, it is assuredly to be taken. But the main thing is—conduct yourself more sensibly. Now how could you expect that a thick syrup would pass through a delicate capillary tube, when we still further compress that little tube? It's impossible. So it is with the gall-duct. Why, this is all very simple.

THE BARUINYA. Well, very good, very good.

THE DOCTOR. It's "very good," but it still remains just as before. It cannot go on, baruinya, it is impossible. Well, good-by.

THE BARUINYA. *Not good-by.*¹¹ I shall expect you this evening anyway. Without you I cannot decide.

THE DOCTOR. All right, all right. If I have time I will drop in. (Exit.)

¹¹ The Doctor says *proshchaite*; corresponding to the French adieu; the lady replies, *nye proshchaite a da svidanya*, "till we meet," *au revoir*.

SCENE XLII

The Same, without the DOCTOR

THE BARUINYA (*seeing the MUZHIKS*). What is this? What does it mean? What men are these? (*The MUZHIKS make low bows.*)

FEODOR IVANUITCH. These are peasants from near Kursk come about buying land of Leonid Feodorovitch.

THE BARUINYA. I see they are peasants, but who let them come in?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Leonid Feodorovitch gave the order. They have just been talking with him about the sale of the land.

THE BARUINYA. What sale, pray? We don't need to sell any land. But the main thing—what an idea to let men in from the street into the house. How could they let men in from the street. It is impossible to let people in who have been sleeping God knows where. . . . (*She grows more and more excited.*) In their garments I imagine every fold is just full of microbes: microbes of scarlatina, microbes of smallpox, microbes of diphtheria. For you see they are from near Kursk, from the government of Kursk, where diphtheria is epidemic! . . . Doctor, Doctor! Call the doctor back!

(LEONID FEODOROVITCH goes out, closing the door. GRIGORI hastens after the doctor.)

SCENE XLIII

The Same, without LEONID FEODOROVITCH and GRIGORI

VASILI LEONIDUITCH (*puffs smoke over the muzhiks*). It's all right, mama. If you wish I'll smoke them so that it'll be death to all microbes. What do you say? (THE BARUINYA preserves a stony silence, waiting the DOCTOR'S return.) (*To the muzhiks.*) Do you breed pigs? There's some profit in that.

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FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, sometimes we have to do with pigs!

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Like this . . . i-u, i-u? (*Grunts like a young pig.*)

THE BARUINYA. Vovò, Vovò! Stop!

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Good imitation. What do you say?

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, very like!

THE BARUINYA. Vovò, stop, I tell you!

SECOND MUZHIK. What does he do that for?

THIRD MUZHIK. I said we ought to go to our lodging while. . . .

SCENE XLIV

The Same, the DOCTOR, and GRIGORI

THE DOCTOR. Well, what is it now? What is the matter?

THE BARUINYA. Here you are telling us not to get excited. Well, how can one be calm? I have not seen my sister for two months. I deny myself to every dubious caller. And suddenly, here in the middle of my house are men from Kursk—straight from Kursk, where diphtheria is epidemic!

THE DOCTOR. What—these galliards?

THE BARUINYA. Why, yes, straight from the diphtheria district.

THE DOCTOR. Yes, of course, if they are from a diphtheria district, then, of course, it's careless; still there's no reason for being excited.

THE BARUINYA. But you yourself prescribe extreme caution.

THE DOCTOR. Why, yes, why, yes; only there's no need of getting much excited.

THE BARUINYA. Why, what do you mean? We must have complete disinfection.

THE DOCTOR. No; why complete? That would cost too much—three hundred rubles, and probably more. And I will arrange it for you cheaply and just as effective. Add to one large bottle of water. . . .

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THE BARUINYA. Distilled?

THE DOCTOR. It makes no difference. Distilled water is better. . . . To one bottle of water, a tablespoonful of salicylic acid, and have everything washed with it which they have touched; and send away these galliards themselves, of course. That is all. Then it's safe. Then take two or three glassfuls of the same solution and spray it into the air with the atomizer, and see how good it will be. Perfectly harmless.

THE BARUINYA. Where is Tanya? Call Tanya.

SCENE XLV

The Same, and TANYA

TANYA. What do you wish?

THE BARUINYA. You know the large bottle in the dressing-room?

TANYA. From which you sprinkled the washerwoman yesterday?

THE BARUINYA. Why, yes—what other one is there? Now, then, take that bottle . . . and first wash the place where they are standing with soap, then with his . . .

TANYA. I will obey. I know how.

THE BARUINYA. Then take the atomizer. . . . However, I will come back; I'll do that myself.

THE DOCTOR. Then do so, and don't be afraid. Well, then, *da svidanya!*—till this evening. (Exit.)

SCENE XLVI

The Same, without the DOCTOR

THE BARUINYA. And away with these men, away with them, so that not a breath from them may be left! Off with them! off with them! Go! What are you staring at?

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, we were so stupid, when we were told. . . .

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GRIGORI (*leading the muzhiks away*). Well, well, go! go!

SECOND MUZHIK. Give me my handkerchief, then.

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord! I said it would be better to go to our lodgings.

(GRIGORI *pushes him out.*)

SCENE XLVII

The LADY, GRIGORI, FEODOR IVANUITCH, TANYA, VASILY LEONIDUITCH, *and the* ERRAND-BOY

ERRAND-BOY (*who has tried several times to speak*). Am I going to have an answer?

THE BARUINYA. Ah, it's the boy from Bourdier's (*growing angry*). There is none, there is none! and take it back. I told her that I had not ordered such a costume and I won't allow my daughter to wear it.

ERRAND-BOY. I know nothing about it—I was sent.

THE BARUINYA. Go! Go and take it back. I will go there myself.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH (*solemnly*). Mr. Ambassador from Bourdier, depart!

ERRAND-BOY. You might have said that long ago. Here I've been sitting five hours.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Emissary of Bourdier, depart!

THE BARUINYA. Stop now, I beg of you.

(*Exit the* ERRAND-BOY.)

SCENE XLVIII

The Same, without the ERRAND-BOY

THE BARUINYA. Betsy! where is she? One has to wait an age for her!

VASILY LEONIDUITCH (*screams at the top of his voice*). Betsy! Petrishchef! Come quick! hurry! hurry! What do you say?

SCENE XLIX

The Same, PETRISHCHEF, BETSY, and MARYA
KONSTANTINOVNA

THE BARUINYA. We have to wait an age for you.

BETSY. On the contrary, I have been waiting for you.
(PETRISHCHEF *nods and kisses the lady's hand.*)

THE BARUINYA. How are you? (*To BETSY.*) You always have an answer ready.

BETSY. Mamma, if you are not in good spirits, then I'd rather not go with you.

THE BARUINYA. Are we going, or are we not going?

BETSY. Yes, let us go; what's to be done?

THE BARUINYA. Did you see what Bourdier sent?

BETSY. I saw it, and I liked it very much. I ordered the costume, and I'll wear it when it's paid for.

THE BARUINYA. I won't pay for it, and I won't permit you to wear an improper costume.

BETSY. When did it become improper? At one time it was becoming, but then *pruderie* came over you. . . .

THE BARUINYA. Not *pruderie*; but if the whole waist is made over, it might do.

BETSY. Mama, truly that is impossible.

THE BARUINYA. Well, get your things on. (*They sit down; GRIGORI puts on their overshoes.*)

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Marya Konstantinovna! Do you see what emptiness reigns in the anteroom?

MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA. What is it? (*Laughs in advance.*)

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. The boy from Bourdier is gone. What do you say? Is that good? (*Laughs boisterously.*)

THE BARUINYA. Well, let us go! (*Goes to the door and immediately returns.*) Tanya!

TANYA. What do you order?

THE BARUINYA. Don't let Fifka take cold while I am gone. If she should beg to be let out, then don't fail to put on her little yellow coat. She isn't quite well.

TANYA. Very good.

(*Exeunt THE BARUINYA, BETSY, and GRIGORI.*)

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SCENE L

PETRISHCHEF, VASILI LEONIDUITCH, TANYA, and FEODOR IVANUITCH

PETRISHCHEF. Well, now, tell me; did you get it?

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. I'll tell you, it was hard work. First I went to my progenitor; he roared at me and drove me away. Then I went to my progenitrix and I got it. It's here! (*Slaps his pocket.*) If I undertake anything, there's no getting away from me! Regular nippers! What do you say? And they'll bring my wolf-hounds to-day.

(PETRISHCHEF and VASILI LEONIDUITCH *put on their coats and leave the room.* TANYA *follows them.*)

SCENE LI

FEODOR IVANUITCH *alone*

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Yes, always disagreeable scenes. Why is it they can't live in concord. Yes; to tell the truth, the young generation is different. And the rule of women? Why, only a short time ago how Leonid Feodorovitch wanted to say a word in their favor, but he saw that she was in a fret and he slammed the door to. He's a man of rare goodness. Yes, of rare goodness. . . . What does this mean? Tanya bringing them back again?

SCENE LII

TANYA. Come in, come in, little uncles, it's all right.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Why have you brought them in again?

TANYA. Why, you see, Feodor Ivanuitch, batyushka, we must try to work out some plan for them. I'll have to wash it up anyway.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Why, the deal won't come off; I can see that plainly enough.

FIRST MUZHIK. Tell us, respected sir, will our business be successful? You, your honor, might take a little trouble for us and we can express the full gratitude of the mir as a reward for your pains.

THIRD MUZHIK. Try, dear heart,—it is impossible for us to live. We have little land—there isn't room enough for cattle, even for a hen I might say. (*He bows.*)

FEODOR IVANUITCH. I am sorry for you, and I know how it is, brothers. I understand it very well. But you see he has refused. How can it be managed now? And the baruinya is also against it. It's unlikely. However, give me your paper. I'll go, and see what I can do. I'll implore him. (*Exit.*)

SCENE LIII

TANYA and THREE MUZHIKS (*they sigh*)

TANYA. Will you tell me, little uncles, what you're after?

FIRST MUZHIK. Why, it was only to put his signature on.

TANYA. You mean that the barin should sign a paper? Yes?

FIRST MUZHIK. That's all—just to put his hand to it and take the money, and that settles it.

THIRD MUZHIK. All he would need to do is to sign! As the muzhiks want, so, let him say, do I want. And that's all there is to it. He takes the money and signs, and—that's the end of it.

TANYA. All it needs is to sign? Simply to have the barin sign the paper? (*Ponders.*)

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely that's all the affair depends on. When he has signed—of course, there's nothing more needed.

TANYA. You wait a little and see what Feodor Ivanuitch will say. . . . If he doesn't persuade him, I'll try my hand.

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FIRST MUZHIK. You'll bring him round?

TANYA. I'll try.

THIRD MUZHIK. Aï! you're going to work for us, girl? If only you work it for us; I say we'll bind ourselves to support you all your life long at the expense of the mir. That's something!

FIRST MUZHIK. If you pull off such a scheme, reely, we can make you rich.

SECOND MUZHIK. That's the talk!

TANYA. Truly I can't promise, as the saying goes:—

“A trial
Is no denial,”

but. . . .

FIRST MUZHIK. But to ask is no task! It's reely so.

SCENE LIV

The Same, and FEODOR IVANUITCH

FEODOR IVANUITCH. No, brothers, your affair won't go; he didn't agree and he won't agree. Take your document. Go, go!

FIRST MUZHIK (*takes the paper. To TANYA*). So, then, we shall have to depend on you.

TANYA. Presently, presently. You go wait outside, and in a minute I'll come and tell you what.

(*Exeunt MUZHIKS.*)

SCENE LV

FEODOR IVANUITCH *and* TANYA

TANYA. Feodor Ivanuitch, dearest, go and ask the barin to come out to me. I need to have a little word with him.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What news have you?

TANYA. It is important, Feodor Ivanuitch. Tell him, please; it's no harm, I assure you.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What's it about?

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TANYA. Oh, it's a little secret. I'll tell you by and by. But please go and speak to him.

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*smiling*). I don't understand what you are up to. However, I'll tell him, I'll tell him. (*Exit.*)

SCENE LVI

TANYA *alone*

TANYA. Truly, I'll do it. Why, he himself has said that Semyon has the power; and you see, I know just how to work it. Last time no one had a suspicion. But now I'll coach Semyon. And if the thing doesn't work, there's no harm done. What's the sin?

SCENE LVII

TANYA, LEONID FEODOROVITCH, *and, following them*,
FEODOR IVANUITCH

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*smiling*). So here's the little petitioner. What is your trouble?

TANYA. It's a little secret, Leonid Feodorovitch. Permit me to tell you alone by ourselves.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. What can it be? . . . Feodor, leave us for a moment.

SCENE LVIII

LEONID FEODOROVITCH *and* TANYA

TANYA. As I was born and have lived in your house, Leonid Feodorovitch, and as I am grateful to you for everything, I will open my heart as to my own father. Semyon, who is living with us, wants to marry me.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. What is that?

TANYA. I will be open before you as before God. I have no one to consult with, as I am an orphan. . . .

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Well, why not? He seems like a good young fellow.

TANYA. That is so; and there would be no objection if I were not dubious about one thing . . . and I wanted to ask you . . . there is one thing about him, and I can't make it out . . . whether it is anything bad.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. What is it? Does he drink?

TANYA. No, thank God! But as I know, there is such a thing as spirit-alism. . . .

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. You know that?

TANYA. Certainly I do! I am greatly interested in it. Others, like as not, not being educated, don't understand it. . . .

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Well, what about it?

TANYA. Well, you see, I'm troubled about Semyon. This happens with him.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. What happens?

TANYA. Well, it's something like spirit-alism. Ask the servants about it. As soon as he goes to sleep at the table, immediately the table begins to shake; everything squeaks like this, *tuk—tu—tuk*. All the servants have heard it.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Why, that's just what I told Sergyei Ivanovitch this morning. Well? . . .

TANYA. Then . . . when was it? . . . Yes, on Wednesday. We had just sat down to dinner. He had hardly sat down at the table when the spoon of itself jumped right into his hand!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Ah! that is interesting. Jumped into his hand? Tell me, was he asleep?

TANYA. I did not notice. I think he must have been.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Well?

TANYA. Well, now I'm afraid, and on this account I wanted to ask whether there would be any harm come of it? To live together a lifetime and such a thing in him!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*smiling*). No, don't be worried; there's no harm in it. That simply signifies that he is a medium, merely a medium. I knew beforehand that he was a medium.

TANYA. Is that it? . . . And I was really afraid.

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LEONID FEODOROVITCH. No, don't be alarmed; it's nothing. (*Aside.*) Now this is fine! Kapchitch can't be here, and we'll experiment with him this evening. . . . No, my dear, don't be alarmed. He will make you a good husband, and always. . . . And this peculiar power, it's in all people. Only in some it's weaker, in others it's stronger.

TANYA. I thank you humbly. Now I won't think about it any more. But I was afraid! . . . That of course comes from our lack of learning.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. No, no, don't be alarmed. . . . Feodor!

SCENE LIX

The Same, and FEODOR IVANUITCH

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. I am going out. It's to get everything ready for the séance this evening.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. You know Kapchitch found he couldn't come.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. No matter; it's all the same! (*Puts on his overcoat.*) A test séance we'll have with our own medium.

(*Exit. FEODOR IVANUITCH accompanies him.*)

SCENE LX

TANYA alone

TANYA. He believed it, he believed it. (*Squeals and jumps.*) My gracious, he believed it! It's a real miracle! (*Squeals.*) Now I'll manage it, if only Semyon doesn't lose his wits.

SCENE LXI

TANYA and FEODOR IVANUITCH

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*coming back*). Well, have you told your secret?

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TANYA. Yes, I have. And I will tell it to you—later! And I have a favor to ask of you, also, Feodor Ivanuitch.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What favor have you to ask of me?

TANYA (*blushingly*). You have been like a second father to me, and I will speak to you openly as before God!

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Now don't you flatter; straight to the point!

TANYA. The point? The point is that Semyon wants to marry me.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What is that? That explains what I've noticed. . . .

TANYA. Yes, why should I hide it. I am an orphan, and you yourself know how people behave here in the city: every one's after you—even Grigori Mikhailuitch . . . I can't get rid of him. . . . And that other one too. . . . You know? They think I have no soul, that I am made for their plaything. . . .

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Clever girl, I praise you! Well, what now?

TANYA. Well, Semyon wrote his father, and he, that is, his father, has seen me to-day, and first thing he says: he's spoilt—that is about his son . . . Feodor Ivanuitch! (*bows*) take the place of my father, speak with the old man, with Semyon's father. I might take them into the kitchen and you might find them there and talk with the old man.

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*smiling*). That means, you want me to be your matchmaker, does it? Well, it's in my power.

TANYA. Feodor Ivanuitch, dear, take the place of my own father, and I will pray God for you as long as I live.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Very good, very good; I'll go by and by. I promise you, I'll do it. (*Takes up his newspaper.*)

TANYA. Be my second father.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Very good, very good.

TANYA. Then, I shall have some hope. . . . (*Exit.*)

SCENE LXII

FEODOR IVANUITCH *alone*

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*wags his head*). Ah, she is a gentle, pretty little girl. Just think how many such are ruined! Why, if they take only one misstep—they go from hand to hand! . . . Then there's no one to pull them out of the mire! Just like that darling little Natalya . . . She also was pretty and her mother cherished her and looked after her and brought her up well. . . . (*Takes his newspaper.*) Well now, how is our Ferdinand ¹² going to get out of his scrape? . . .

Curtain

¹² Prince Ferdinand Maximilian in 1887 undertook to rule over Bulgaria, but was not recognized by Turkey and Russia until 1896.

ACT II

The stage represents the interior of the domestics' kitchen. The Muzhiks with their coats off and all sweaty are sitting at the table drinking tea. FEODOR IVANUITCH, with a cigar, is at the farther end of the stage. On the stove the old cook, but he is not visible during the first four scenes.

SCENE I

The THREE MUZHIKS and FEODOR IVANUITCH

FEODOR IVANUITCH. My advice is that you don't stand in his way. If it's his wish and hers too, then God be with them. The girl is pretty and honest. No matter if she is dressy. That's the city way; you can't get along without it. Besides, the girl's clever.

SECOND MUZHIK. Well, if that's his wish. He's got to live with her, not I. Only she's too mighty fine. How can we get along with her in our izba? She won't let her husband's mother even pat her!

FEODOR IVANUITCH. That, my worthy brother, doesn't come from fineness, but from character. If she has a good character, then she will be submissive and considerate.

SECOND MUZHIK. Well, I'll take her, if the lad is so set upon it that he must have her. It's a bad thing for a man to live with one he doesn't love. I'll consult with my old woman, and then trust it to God.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Then your hand on it.

SECOND MUZHIK. Well, it seems to be settled so.

FIRST MUZHIK. How lucky you are, Zakhar! You come here to settle up some business and you get a regular queen for a daughter-in-law. Only you must wet it down a little, of course, to make it regular.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. That is not necessary at all. (*Awkward silence.*) You see, I understand very well the life you peasants lead. I will tell you I am thinking of buying a little land. I should like to build a little house and live like a peasant.¹ Perhaps in your region.

SECOND MUZHIK. It's lovely work.

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, with money one can buy every kind of comfort in the country.

THIRD MUZHIK. That's the talk! Country life, I'll say, is free at any rate, not at all as it is in the city.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Tell me, would you take me into your mir if I should settle among you?

SECOND MUZHIK. Of course we would. You'd set up liquor for the elders and then they'd admit you.

FIRST MUZHIK. You might open a drinking establishment, for instance, or a tavern; then, you'd have such a life that you'd not need to die at all! You'd reign like a little tsar and be at the tip-top!

FEODOR IVANUITCH. We'll see. I should only wish to live a quiet life till old age. Even here I live well enough, and I should be sorry to leave it. Leonid Feodorovitch, you see, is a man of rare goodness.

FIRST MUZHIK. That's reely so. But why did he treat our business so? Is it to be left as it is without results?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. He would like to.

SECOND MUZHIK. It seems he's afraid of his wife.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Not afraid of her; but they don't agree.

THIRD MUZHIK. But, father, if you would only help us. For how are we to live? We have little land. . . .

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, let us see what will come about from Tatyana's labors. You know she has taken hold of it.

THIRD MUZHIK (*drinks tea*). Father, show your kind heart. We have little land; there's not room for cattle, nor even for a hen. . . .

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, if only this affair were in my hands! (*To the SECOND MUZHIK.*) So, it's settled,

¹*Krest'yanstvoval*, a verb from *krest'yanin*, a peasant, the "Christian."

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brother;² you and I are to be the matchmakers. It's all settled about Tanya?

SECOND MUZHİK. If I have already given my word I don't take it back, even though we haven't wet it down. If only our affairs could be settled.

SCENE II

The Same: enter the COOK; she glances at the stove, makes gestures in that direction, and immediately begins to talk animatedly with FEODOR IVANUITCH

THE COOK. They've just called Semyon up-stairs from the "white" kitchen; the barin and that man who summons with him, the bald one, have sat him down and ordered him to act in place of Kapchitch.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What lie are you telling?

THE COOK. It's a fact! Yakof just told Tanya.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. That's strange!

SCENE III

The Same, and the COACHMAN

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What do you want?

THE COACHMAN (*to* FEODOR IVANUITCH). You may say that I wasn't hired to live with dogs. Let some one else live with dogs, I don't agree to!

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What dogs?

COACHMAN. Vasili Leonduitch has had three dogs sent to us, to the coachmen's quarters. They've soiled all round, they are howling, and it's impossible to come near 'em—they bite! They're ugly devils—they'll chew you up quick as a wink. I'd like to smash their legs with a stick of wood.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. When did this happen?

COACHMAN. Well, they were brought to-day from the exhibition; some kind of costly thick-furred dogs—the

² *Tak tak, bratyets; tak means so or yes.*

demon only knows what they are. Either the dogs or the coachman must leave the coachmen's quarters. Tell 'em so.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Yes, that's all wrong. I'll go and find out.

COACHMAN. Let them be brought here to Lukerya.

THE COOK (*hotly*). People eat here, and you want to shut dogs up in here. Even as it is . . .

COACHMAN. In my place there are kaftans, fur robes and harnesses. And they expect neatness of us. Well, I suppose they can go to the dvornik's room.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. I must talk with Vasili Leoniduitch.

COACHMAN (*angrily*). He'd better hang these dogs round his neck, yes, and go round with 'em. But never you fear, he likes nothing better than riding about. He's ruined "Krasavchik," all for nothing. What a horse he was! . . . ekh! what a life!

(*He goes out, slamming the door.*)

SCENE IV

The Same, without the COACHMAN

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Yes, bad doings, bad doings! (*To the muzhiks.*) Well, boys, since it's all decided, good-by for now.

THE MUZHIKS. *S Bogom*— God be with you!

(*Exit FEODOR IVANUITCH.*)

SCENE V

The Same, without FEODOR IVANUITCH

(*As soon as FEODOR IVANUITCH leaves the kitchen, groaning is heard on the stove.*)

SECOND MUZHIK. He's as smooth spoken as a general.³

³ He calls it *anaral*.

THE COOK. That's the talk! A room to himself; all his washing done by the masters; tea, sugar—all furnished him, and food from their table.

THE OLD MAN-COOK. Why the devil shouldn't he live well?—he steals!

SECOND MUZHIK. Who's that—on the stove?

THE COOK. He's a little old man. (*Silence.*)

FIRST MUZHIK. Well, I saw you a little while ago; you were having supper; you must be quite rich folks.

THE COOK. We can't complain. As far as that goes, she's not stingy; white bread on Sundays, fish on fast days, and whoever wants eats meat.

SECOND MUZHIK. Does any one eat meat on fast days?

THE COOK. Eh! yes, probably all do. The only ones who fast are the coachman—not the one that came in, but the old one—and Sioma, yes, and I and the house-keeper—but all the rest eat meat.

SECOND MUZHIK. He himself does, I suppose.

THE COOK. Eh! what an idea. He's forgotten to remember what a fast is!

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord!

FIRST MUZHIK. That's the great folks' way; they find it in books. Because it's intellect.

THIRD MUZHIK. Sitnik-bread every day, I suppose!

THE COOK. Sitnik-bread! They never see such coarse bread! You should just see what they eat! What don't they have!⁴

FIRST MUZHIK. Great folks' food, of course, is airy stuff.

THE COOK. Airy stuff, indeed! I tell you they are healthy eaters.

FIRST MUZHIK. With an appetite,⁵ of course.

THE COOK. Because they drink with it. Those sweet kind of wines, brandies, frothy liquors; each course has its own kind. It's eat and drink, eat and drink.

FIRST MUZHIK. Of course it's *preportioned* out, and each kind is brought.

THE COOK. It is a sight! what healthy feeders they

⁴ *Chevo, chevo nyet*, of what, of what, not.

⁵ The peasant says "appékite."

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are! With them it isn't sitting down, eating, crossing yourself, and getting up—but they keep at it.

SECOND MUZHIK. Like hogs with their feet in the trough. (*The muzhiks laugh.*)

THE COOK. Lord save us! Scarcely do they get their eyes open, immediately comes the samovar, tea, coffee, *shchikolat*. As soon as they have drunk up two samovars, then it's "put on another." And then breakfast, and then it's dinner, and there's coffee again. As soon as they've stuffed themselves then they have tea again. Then they're eating little snacks: candy and jam, and there's no end to it! Even lying in bed they're still eating!

THIRD MUZHIK. Yes, that's fine! (*Laughs heartily.*)

FIRST AND SECOND MUZHIKS. What's the matter with you?

THIRD MUZHIK. I'd like to live one little day like that!

SECOND MUZHIK. Well, but when do they do their work?

THE COOK. What work do they do? Playing cards and on the piano is their only work. The young lady, just as soon as she opens her eyes, flies to the pianoforte and at it she goes! And that one who lives here, the teacher, she stands round and waits till they're done with it, and as soon as it is free, she begins to pound at it! Sometimes they get two pianos and then four of 'em are hammering away, two at each. They hammer away till you can hear it down here.

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord!

THE COOK. Well, that's all their work; playing the piano and cards. As soon as they meet they have cards, they drink wine, they smoke, and so it goes all night. As soon as they're up, they go to eating again.

SCENE VI

The Same, and SEMYON

SEMYON. Tea and sugar!

FIRST MUZHIK. We beg you to sit down!

SEMYON (*goes to the table.*) Thank you humbly.

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(FIRST MUZHIK *pours out tea for him.*)

SECOND MUZHIK. Where have you been?

SEMYON. Been up-stairs.

SECOND MUZHIK. Tell us what is going on up there?

SEMYON. It's beyond my comprehension. I don't know what you call it.

SECOND MUZHIK. But tell us, what is it all about?

SEMYON. I don't know what they call it. Some force they tried to find in me. I don't understand it. Tatyana says: "Do as I say and we'll get our muzhiks their land—he'll give it."

SECOND MUZHIK. But how will she do it?

SEMYON. I can't find out from her; she won't tell. "Only do as I tell you," says she.

SECOND MUZHIK. But do what?

SEMYON. Nothing especial at first. They made me sit down, they put out the light, they told me to go to sleep. And Tatyana was hiding there. They didn't see her, but I did.

SECOND MUZHIK. What was that for?

SEMYON. God knows, it's beyond me.

FIRST MUZHIK. Of course, it was to kill time.

SECOND MUZHIK. Well, it's evident you and I can't make anything out of these things. But now tell me: have you had much money in advance?

SEMYON. I haven't had any of my wages; twenty-eight rubles are due me.

SECOND MUZHIK. That's all right. Well, then, if God is willing and we come to terms about the land, I will take you home with me, Siomka.

SEMYON. I'll be glad of that!

SECOND MUZHIK. You've been spoilt, I fear. You won't want to plow, will you?

SEMYON. Plow? Give me a chance! Mowing and plowing—all that kind of thing one doesn't forget.

FIRST MUZHIK. But after living in the city things probably won't be very attractive to you.

SEMYON. Nonsense; one can live in the country, too.

FIRST MUZHIK. Now Uncle Mitri is after your place, for a soft thing.

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SEMYON. Well, Uncle Mitri, it gets tiresome. It looks easy at first, but there's a lot of chasing round. You use yourself all up.

THE COOK. You just ought to see the balls they have, Uncle Mitri—that would surprise you.

THIRD MUZHIK. Tell me, do they keep eating?

THE COOK. The idea! You ought to see what takes place. . . . Feodor Ivanutch took me along once. I looked on. The ladies were just awful! Such dresses, such dresses! You'd have been dumbfounded—bare down to these places and with bare arms!

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord!

SECOND MUZHIK. Tfu! how vulgar!

FIRST MUZHIK. Why! does the climate admit of that?

THE COOK. And I saw it with my own eyes, little uncle! Think of that! All of them naked! Would you believe it—even the old ladies were naked—our baruinya—she has grandchildren, you know.

SECOND MUZHIK. O Lord!

THE COOK. Then I saw this: When the music struck up, when they began to play, then instantly the gentlemen each went to his lady, put his arm round her, and began to whirl around.

SECOND MUZHIK. Even the old women?

THE COOK. Even the old women!

SEMYON. No, the old women keep their seats.

THE COOK. Nonsense, I saw it myself.

SEMYON. It's not so.

THE OLD MAN-COOK (*raising himself up, hoarsely*) That's the polka-mazurka. Eh, fool! you don't know anything—that's the way they dance. . . .

THE COOK. There now, you dancer, hold your tongue Vo! Some one's coming!

SCENE VII

The Same, and GRIGORI. *The OLD MAN-COOK quickly hides himself*

GRIGORI (*to the COOK*). Give me some sauer-kraut.

THE COOK. I've only just come from the cellar, down I must go again! Who's this for?

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GRIGORI. A mess for the young ladies! Lively!

THE COOK. Here they eat so much sweet that they can't eat any more; then they crave sauer-kraut!

FIRST MUZHIK. As a purge, of course.

THE COOK. Well, yes; as soon as there is a little room they are at it again. *(Takes a dish and exit.)*

SCENE VIII

The Same, without the COOK

GRIGORI *(to the muzhiks)*. See how they have taken possession! Look out! If the baruinya gets wind of it, she'll give it to you worse than she did a while ago!

(Laughs and goes away.)

SCENE IX

The THREE MUZHIKS, SEMYON, and the OLD MAN-COOK on the stove

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, she raised a storm a while ago . . . it was a caution!

SECOND MUZHIK. At first, evidently, he was going to make the agreement with us; but then, when he saw that she would tear the roof off the izba, he slammed the door: "Go to the devil, I tell you."

THIRD MUZHIK *(waving his hand)*. It's the same everywhere. So with my old woman. I tell you, when she gets red-hot . . . she's a terror! Then I get out of the izba. The devil take her. Look out, I tell you, or she'll be after you with the poker. O Lord!

SCENE X

The Same, and YAKOF

YAKOF *(comes running in with a prescription)*. Sioma, run to the druggist, quick, and get these powders for the baruinya.

SEMYON. But, you see, he told me not to go off.

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YAKOF. You'll have time enough. You won't be wanted till after tea . . . Tea and sugar!

FIRST MUZHIK. We ask your favor. (*Exit SEMYON.*)

SCENE XI

The Same, without SEMYON

YAKOF. No time . . . well, pour me out a little cupful for company's sake.

FIRST MUZHIK. We were just holding a little talk: how very haughtily your lady behaved a while ago.

YAKOF. Oh, she's fiery; it's a caution! So fiery . . . she doesn't know what she's doing. Sometimes she actually weeps with rage!

FIRST MUZHIK. What, for instance, I wanted to ask. She had something to say about the makrotes: . . . "they've brought makrotes, with them," says she, "makrotes," what do they use these same makrotes for?

YAKOF. Those are makroves, not makrotes. They say they're a kind of bug; from them all sorts of diseases spring. Now perhaps they are on you. As soon as you had gone they washed and washed and rinsed and rinsed where you had been standing. There's a kind of drug which kills these bugs.

SECOND MUZHIK. But where on us are these bugs?

YAKOF (*drinks tea*). Well, they say they are so small that you can't see 'em even with a glass.

SECOND MUZHIK. But how do they know that they're on me? Maybe there's more of the vile things on her than on me.

YAKOF. I'd go and ask her, if I were you.

SECOND MUZHIK. I think it's all empty nonsense.

YAKOF. Of course it's nonsense; but the doctors must invent something; else, why should we pay them our money? Here's one comes to us every day. Comes in, talks awhile . . . "ten rubles!"

SECOND MUZHIK. You don't say!⁶

⁶ Expressed by the one word *vre*, from the peasant word *vrat*, to babble, to lie.

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YAKOF. Well, there's one so fine, he gets a hundred!
FIRST MUZHIK. What, a hundred?

YAKOF. A hundred! . . . You say a hundred? Why, he gets it by the thousand, when he goes out of town. "Give a thousand," says he, "but if you don't give, you may perish."

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord!

SECOND MUZHIK. Tell us, does he know some spell?

YAKOF. It must be he knows. Where I lived before was at a general's . . . near Moscow . . . he was that stern, and proud . . . he was terrible . . . that general! Well, his little daughter took sick. They immediately sent for this one. "A thousand rubles and I'll come." . . . Well, they agreed . . . he came. Well, something did not please him. . . . O ye fathers, how he flew at the general! "Oh," said he, "this is the way you treat me, is it? Then I won't tend this case." Would you believe it! That general forgot his pride, coaxed him in every way. "Batyushka! please don't desert us!" . . .

FIRST MUZHIK. And he gave him a thousand?

YAKOF. Indeed, he did.

SECOND MUZHIK. Foolish waste of money! What wouldn't us muzhiks have done with it!

THIRD MUZHIK. I think it's all nonsense too. That time when my leg was gangrened, I went to the doctor and went to the doctor; I say I spent five rubles on medicine. I stopped doctoring, and it got well!

(The OLD MAN-COOK on the stove coughs.)

YAKOF. Again here, friend?

FIRST MUZHIK. What kind of a little man is that?

YAKOF. He used to be our barin's cook; he comes to see Lukerya.

FIRST MUZHIK. Master-cook, I suppose. Tell me, does he live here?

YAKOF. Nay! They don't allow him here. He spends his days in one place, his nights in another. If he has three kopeks, he sleeps under cover; when he's drunk up all he has he comes here.

SECOND MUZHIK. How did he get so?

YAKOF. Well, he lost his grip. And yet he was a fine man, like a barin! He wore a gold watch, and he had forty rubles a month wages. And now he'd have starved to death if it had not been for Lukerya.

SCENE XII

The Same, and the COOK (with sauer-kraut)

YAKOF (to LUKERYA). So Paul Petrovitch is here again, is he?

THE COOK. Where can he go—do you want him to freeze to death?

THIRD MUZHIK. What doesn't liquor do! Liquor, I say! (*Clucks his tongue with sympathy.*)

SECOND MUZHIK. It's well known if a man is strong—he's stronger than granite; if he's weak, he's weaker than water.

THE OLD MAN-COOK (*climbs down from the stove with shaky legs and hands*). Lukerya, I say, give me a little glass.

THE COOK. Where are you crawling to? I'll give you such a glass . . .

THE OLD MAN-COOK. Do you fear God? I'm dying! Brothers, a five-kopek piece . . .

THE COOK. I say, climb back on the stove.

THE OLD MAN-COOK. Cook! a h-half glass! For Christ's sake, I say; do you understand? I beg you for Christ's sake! . . .

THE COOK. Go, go! Here's tea for you.

THE OLD MAN-COOK. What's tea? tea? Slops! weak stuff! A little liquor . . . just a mouthful . . . Lukerya!

THIRD MUZHIK. Akh, friend, how tormented he is?

SECOND MUZHIK. Do give him some!

THE COOK (*gets a small glass from the cupboard and fills it up*). There, I won't give you any more.

THE OLD MAN-COOK (*seizes it and drinks it eagerly*). Lukerya! Cook! I drink and you understand . . .

THE COOK. Well well, stop talking. Climb up on the stove and don't make a sound.

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(*The OLD MAN-COOK climbs up obediently, and mumbles something incessantly between his teeth.*)

SECOND MUZHIK. That's what comes when a man's weak!

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, human weakness!

THIRD MUZHIK. What's to be said?

(*The OLD MAN-COOK stows himself away, and keeps mumbling. Silence.*)

SECOND MUZHIK. What I wanted to ask . . . this girl from our place who lives here . . . Aksinya's daughter. Now how about her? How does she live,—tell me, is she straight?

YAKOF. She's a nice girl; you can praise her.

THE COOK. I'll tell you truly, little uncle, for I know how things go on here; if you mean to take Tatyana for your son, take her quick before she's spoilt, or else it'll be too late.

YAKOF. Yes, that's truly so. Here last summer Natalya was a girl living with us. She was a pretty girl. Still she fell—worse than him there. . . . (*Points to the MAN-COOK.*)

THE COOK. The fact is so many of us women are ruined—they would dam a pond! Every one is attracted by the easy work and the rich food. But you see, with the rich food one soon goes astray. And as soon as she's gone astray, then they don't want her any more. They throw her aside—and get a fresh one in her place. So it was with Natasha, poor girl. She went astray; they immediately drove her off. She had a baby, took sick, last spring she went to the hospital, and died there. And what a girl she was!

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord! Folks are weak; they need our pity.

THE OLD MAN-COOK. Yes, how they pity us! the devils! (*Puts his legs down from the stove.*) For thirty years I roasted over the hearth-stone. And now I'm no longer needed, die like a dog! that's how they pity us!

FIRST MUZHIK. It's reely so; the same old story!

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SECOND MUZHIK. While they're drinking and eating they call you curly-head; when they've done drinking and eating—good-by, frowlsly-head!

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord!

THE OLD MAN-COOK. You know a lot! What does it mean: *soté à la bamong*? What does it mean: *bava-sari*? What can't I do? Think of it! The emperor has eaten my work! But now I'm no longer necessary to those devils. But I don't give in yet!

THE COOK. Well, well, he's begun to talk! I'll give it to you! Creep into your corner, lest you be seen, or else Feodor Ivanuitch will be coming, or some one else, and drive us both off together. (*Silence.*)

YAKOF. Do you know my place—Voznesenskoye?

SECOND MUZHIK. Of course, we know it! It's seventeen versts, not more, by the ford still less. Got land there?

YAKOF. My brother has some, and I send him help I myself have to stay here, but I'm dying for home.

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely!

SECOND MUZHIK. Anisim's your brother, I suppose?

YAKOF. Certainly, my own brother; at the farther end.

SECOND MUZHIK. Of course . . . the third place.

SCENE XIII

The Same, and TANYA (comes in running)

TANYA. Yakof Ivanuitch! why are you taking your ease here? You're called!

YAKOF. Directly. What is it?

TANYA. Firka is barking; she wants something to eat, and her mistress is scolding about you: "What is that rascal up to? He has no pity," says she. "It's time for her dinner long ago, and he doesn't bring it." (*Laughs.*)

YAKOF (*starts to go*). Oh, is she furious? I hope it hasn't got so far as that!

THE COOK (*to YAKOF*). Take the sauer-kraut.

YAKOF. Give it to me, give it to me!

(*Seizes the sauer-kraut and exit.*)

SCENE XIV

The Same, without YAKOF

FIRST MUZHIK. Who is to have dinner now?

TANYA. Oh, the dog. It's her dog. . . . (*She sits down with them and reaches for the teapot.*) Isn't there any tea? . . . If not, I've brought some more! (*Shakes in some more.*)

SECOND MUZHIK. Do they give dinner to the dog?

TANYA. Certainly. They have a special cutlet for her, so that she shan't get too fat. And I wash the clothes for her, for the dog.

THIRD MUZHIK. O Lord!

TANYA. Like that barin who had a funeral for his dog.

SECOND MUZHIK. How was that?

TANYA. This was the way of it . . . a man was telling us about it . . . a barin had a dog and it died. And it was winter and he went out to bury it. He buried it, and as he drove along he wept—this barin. But there was a healthy frost and the coachman's nose ran, and he had to wipe it. . . . Let me fill up your glasses. . . . (*Pours out tea.*) His nose ran and he kept wiping it. The barin noticed it: "what are you crying about?" says he. And the coachman said, "How can I help crying, Sir, when it was such a dog!" (*She laughs.*)SECOND MUZHIK. I suppose he said to himself:—"If it had been his funeral I shouldn't have cried. . . . (*Laughs.*)THE OLD MAN-COOK (*from the stove.*) That's straight, indeed it is!TANYA. Good! The barin got home, and he said to his wife: "What a good coachman we have," said he, "he wept all the way . . . he was so sorry for my Druzhok. Call him in! . . . There, have some vodka to drink and here's a reward for you;" . . . a ruble! And she's just like that; if Yakof doesn't take pity on her dog! (*The muzhiks roar with laughter.*)

FIRST MUZHIK. Fine!

SECOND MUZHIK. That's the way.

THIRD MUZHIK. Ai! girl, you're comical!

TANYA (*pours out more tea*). Take some more! . . . It sometimes looks as if life was fine here; but then again it's disgusting to clean up all these vile things after them; tfu! . . . it's better in the country. (*The muzhiks turn down their cups in protest. TANYA fills them.*) Drink for your good health, Yefim Antonuitch. I pour out for you, Mitri Vlasyevitch.

THIRD MUZHIK. All right, fill up, fill up.

FIRST MUZHIK. Well, Miss Cleverness, how is our business progressing?

TANYA. It's all right; it's coming on. . . .

FIRST MUZHIK. Semyon told us. . . .

TANYA (*quickly*). Told?

SECOND MUZHIK. We couldn't understand from him.

TANYA. I can't explain it now, but I'm doing my best, doing my best. Here it is . . . your document! (*Shows them a paper under her apron.*) If only my little game succeeds! . . . (*She squeals.*) How nice that would be!

SECOND MUZHIK. Look out you don't lose the paper. We had to pay money for it!

TANYA. Don't you worry. His name put to it is all you want, isn't it?

THIRD MUZHIK. Why, what else? His signature and that caps it. (*Turns down his cup.*) There, that'll do.

TANYA (*aside*). He will sign it, you'll see; he'll sign it. . . . Have a little more! (*Pours more tea.*)

FIRST MUZHIK. If only you get the land sold, maybe the mir will pay for your marriage. (*He declines the tea.*)

TANYA (*pours tea and offers it to him*). Have some!

THIRD MUZHIK. Only manage it for us! And we'll give you a wedding, and I say, I'll come and dance at it! Though I haven't danced since I was born, I'll dance for you!

TANYA (*laughs*). Well, I'm in hopes! (*Silence.*)

SECOND MUZHIK (*studying TANYA*). That's very well; but you aren't fitted for peasant's work.

TANYA. I? Why, do you think I'm not strong? You should see me pull the baruinya together. A muzhik couldn't pull harder.

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SECOND MUZHIK. What do you mean . . . "you pull her together"?

TANYA. Why, it's made of bones, like a jacket, up to here. And you have to pull the lacings as when you saddle a horse; sometime even spit on your hands.

SECOND MUZHIK. You mean you tighten her girths?

TANYA. Yes, yes, I lace her up. And you see you can't brace against her with your foot! (*Laughs.*)

SECOND MUZHIK. Why do you lace her up?

TANYA. Because we do!

SECOND MUZHIK. Tell me, has she taken a vow or what?

TANYA. No; for beauty's sake!

FIRST MUZHIK. You mean she strains her belly for the sake of shape!

TANYA. You pull so that her eyes bulge out, but she says: "More! more!" Then you blister your hands, and you say, "That's the best I can do." (*The muzhiks laugh and shake their heads.*) But here, I am talking too much! (*Runs away, laughing.*)

SECOND MUZHIK. What a girl she is; she's full of fun!

FIRST MUZHIK. And how smart!

SECOND MUZHIK. She'll do.⁷

SCENE XV

The THREE MUZHIKS, the COOK, the OLD MAN-COOK (on the stove). Enter SAKHATOF and VASILI LEONID-UITCH. (SAKHATOF has a teaspoon in his hand.)

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Not exactly a dinner but *un déjeuner dinatoire!* A fine breakfast, I tell you! . . . ham of a young porker . . . lovely! Rouillet feeds one well. I've only just got back. (*Noticing the muzhiks.*) These muzhiks here again?

SAKHATOF. Yes, yes, all that was excellent, but we came here to hide something. Where shall we hide it?

⁷The Russian word, translated "smart," is *akkuratna*, accurate, with all it implies. The third peasant says simply *nitchevo*, with a meaning dependent on the context.—Tr.

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VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Excuse me, one instant. (*To the Cook.*) Where are the dogs?

THE COOK. The dogs are in the coachman's room. Could we have them in the servants' kitchen?

VASILY LEONDUITCH. Oh, in the coachman's room. Very good.

SAKHATOF. I'm waiting.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Excuse me, excuse me! What is it? Hide something? Yes, Sergyei Ivanovitch, I'll give you a suggestion; put it in the pocket of one of these muzhiks. Here, this one! You listen! Say, where is your pocket?

THIRD MUZHIK. What do you want of my pocket? What! my pocket? I have money in my pocket!

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Well, then, where's your wallet?

THIRD MUZHIK. What's that to you?

THE COOK. Mind you! That's the young barin!

VASILY LEONIDUITCH (*laughs*). Do you know why he's so alarmed? I'll tell you; he has a pile of money. What?

SAKHATOF. Yes, yes, I understand. Well, then, this way: you talk with them, and meantime I'll slip the spoon in this wallet, so that they themselves won't know it and can't give it away. You talk with them.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. In a minute, in a minute. Well, how is it, boys,^s are you going to buy the land? What?

FIRST MUZHIK. We want to with all our hearts. Only things don't seem to progress.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Well, you mustn't be close! Land is an important item. I've told you about the mint. And you might raise tobacco, too.

FIRST MUZHIK. That's reely so; all sorts of products can be raised.

THIRD MUZHIK. Now, father, you might intercede for us. How can we live otherwise? We have little land—not room even for a hen. . . .

SAKHATOF (*placing the spoon in the THIRD MUZHIK's wallet.*) C'est fait. All right. Come on. (*Exit.*)

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Now don't you be close! hey! Well, good-by! (*Exit.*)

^s *Rebyatushki*, little children.

SCENE XVI

*The THREE MUZHIKS, the COOK, and the OLD MAN-COOK
(on the stove)*

THIRD MUZHIK. I advised going to a lodging-house. For ten kopeks we might have had some comfort, at least; but here—God help us!—"Hand over your money," he says! What does that mean?

SECOND MUZHIK. They must have been drinking!

(The muzhiks turn down their cups, get up, and cross themselves.)

FIRST MUZHIK. Did you notice how he talked . . . that we must sow mint? He must understand things.

SECOND MUZHIK. How sow mint, I'd like to know! Just try it! Bend your back . . . you pay dear for your mint. . . . Well, we thank you humbly. . . . Well, good friend, where can we sleep?

THE COOK. One of you can lie on the stove—the others on the benches.

THIRD MUZHIK. *Spasi Christos*. . . . *(He prays to God.)*

FIRST MUZHIK. If God would only prosper our affair *(lies down)*, to-morrow after dinner we might start home on the railroad and get there by Tuesday.

SECOND MUZHIK. Will you put out the light?

THE COOK. The idea of putting it out! They'll keep running in, wanting first this, then that. . . . However, you lie down; I'll dim it.

SECOND MUZHIK. How can we live on so little land? Ever since Christmas I have been buying grain. And the oat straw is at an end. If I could get four desyatins, I'd have Siomka at home.

FIRST MUZHIK. You have a family; you'd get the land without trouble if he'll only let us have it. If only this business were ended!

THIRD MUZHIK. We must pray to the Queen of Heaven. Perhaps she may have mercy on us.

SCENE XVII

Quiet; sighs. Then clattering steps and a confusion of voices are heard, the door is thrown wide open, and in rush pell-mell: GROSSMANN, blindfolded, holding SAKHATOF by the hand, the PROFESSOR and the DOCTOR, the STOUT LADY and LEONID FEODOROVITCH, BETSY and PETRISHCHEF, VASILI LEONIDUITCH and MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA, the BARUINYA and the BARONESS, FEODOR IVANUITCH and TANYA. The THREE MUZHIKS, the COOK, and the OLD MAN-COOK (invisible). The MUZHIKS jump up. GROSSMANN enters with hasty steps, then pauses.

THE STOUT LADY. Don't worry, I'm watching; I've undertaken to follow him, and I'll fulfil my duty to the letter. Sergyeï Ivanuitch, you are not leading him?

SAKHATOF. Why, no!

THE STOUT LADY. Don't you lead him, but don't resist him. (*To LEONID FEODOROVITCH.*) I know these experiments. I have done them myself. I used to feel a sort of effluence, and as soon as I felt it . . .

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Let me beg of you to observe perfect silence.

THE STOUT LADY. Akh! I understand that. I have felt that in my own case. As soon as my attention is diverted, I can't any longer. . . .

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Sh-h-h! . . .

(*They walk about, search around the FIRST and SECOND MUZHIKS and approach the THIRD MUZHIK. GROSSMANN stumbles over a footstool.*)

THE BARONESS. Mais dites-moi, on le paye?

THE BARUINYA. Je ne saurais vous dire.

THE BARONESS. Mais c'est un monsieur?

THE BARUINYA. Oh! oui!

THE BARONESS. Ça tient du miraculeux, n'est-ce pas? Comment est-ce qu'il trouve?

THE BARUINYA. Je ne saurais vous dire. Mon mari

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vous l'expliquera. (*She catches sight of the muzhiks, looks around, and sees the COOK.*) Pardon! What does this mean? (*The BARONESS joins the group. To the COOK.*) Who admitted the muzhiks?

THE COOK. Yakof brought them.

THE BARUINYA. Who told Yakof to?

THE COOK. I don't know. Feodor Ivanuitch saw them.

THE BARUINYA. Leonid! (*LEONID FEODOROVITCH does not hear, being occupied with the search, and cries Sh-h-h.*) Feodor Ivanuitch! what does this mean? Didn't you see that I have been having the whole ante-room disinfected, and now they have infected my whole kitchen, the black bread, the kvas. . . .

FEODOR IVANUITCH. I supposed there was no danger here; and the men are on business. They came from a long distance, from my own home.

THE BARUINYA. That's just the trouble, they came from the country near Kursk, where even the flies are dying of diphtheria. But the main thing is . . . I gave orders not to have them here in the house. . . . Did I give orders or not? (*She approaches the group clustered round the muzhiks.*) Be careful! Don't touch them!—they're all infected with diphtheria! (*No one heeds her: she goes away with dignity and stands waiting motionless.*)

PETRISHCHEF (*sniffs loudly*). It may be diphtheritic; I don't know, but there's some infection in the air. Don't you perceive it?

BETSY. Stop your chatter! Vovó, in which wallet?

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. In that one, that one! . . . He's coming to it, he's coming to it!

PETRISHCHEF. What is it? here's high spirits or low spirits.⁹

BETSY. This is a time when your cigarettes come in à propos. Smoke, smoke, close to me!

(*PETRISHCHEF bends down and puffs smoke at her.*)

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. He'll find it, I tell you. What?

⁹ *Dukhi ili dúkhi*, "perfumes or spirits."

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GROSSMANN (*nervously fumbling about the* THIRD MUZHIK). Here, here! I feel it's here!

THE STOUT LADY. Do you feel an effluence?

(GROSSMANN *stoops down to the wallet and takes out the spoon.*)

ALL. Bravo! (*General enthusiasm.*)

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Well, so that's where our spoon is found! (*To the muzhiks.*) That's the kind of a man you are!

THIRD MUZHIK. The kind of a man? I never took any of your spoons! Why does he bother me? I never took it, never did I take it, and my soul knows I didn't! Why did he come to me? I saw he meant me no good! "Give me your wallet," he said. And I didn't take the spoon, Christ is my witness, I didn't take it.

(*The young people approach him and laugh.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*angrily to his son*). Your everlasting nonsense! (*To the* THIRD MUZHIK.) Don't worry yourself, little friend. We know you didn't take it; it was only an experiment.

GROSSMANN (*takes off the bandage and pretends to be waking up*). Water, if I may have some . . . please!

(*All bustle about him.*)

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Let us go to the coachman's room. I will show you what a fine bitch I have there . . . *épatante!* What?

BETSY. What a vulgar word! Why can't you say dog?

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Can't do it! You see I couldn't say of you, "What an *épatanta* female Betsy is!" . . . I must say girl. So it is here. What? Isn't that so, Marya Konstantinovna? Isn't that right? (*Laughs.*)

MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA. Well, let us go!

(MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA, BETSY, PETRISHCHEF, and VASILY LEONIDUITCH *exeunt.*)

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SCENE XVIII

The Same, without BETSY, MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA, PETRISHCHEF, and VASILY LEONIDUITCH

THE STOUT LADY (*to* GROSSMANN). Tell me! how is it? Have you recovered? (GROSSMANN *makes no reply.* *To* SAKHATOF.) Did you feel any effluence, Sergyeï Ivanuitch?

SAKHATOF. I wasn't conscious of anything. But it was admirable, admirable. A perfect success.

THE BARONESS. Admirable! Ça ne le fait pas souffrir?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Pas le moins du monde.

THE PROFESSOR (*to* GROSSMANN). Permit me to ask you. (*Hands him the thermometer.*) At the beginning of the experiment it was thirty-seven¹⁰ and two. (*To the DOCTOR.*) So, wasn't it? Now, be good enough to test his pulse. Some diminution is inevitable.

THE DOCTOR (*to* GROSSMANN). Well, sir, allow me to feel your pulse. We will test it, we will test it. (*Takes out his watch and holds it in his hand.*)

THE STOUT LADY (*to* GROSSMANN). Allow me. Is it permissible to call this state in which you found yourself a sleep?

GROSSMANN (*weariedly*). A kind of hypnosis.

SAKHATOF. Then it must be understood that you hypnotize yourself?

GROSSMANN. Why not? Hypnosis may be induced not only by association, by the sound of the tom-tom, for example, as with Charcot, but also by the mere entrance into the hypnotic zone.

SAKHATOF. Let us grant that this is so, but at the same time it would be desirable to define more accurately what hypnosis is.

THE PROFESSOR. Hypnosis is the phenomenon of the transformation of one energy into another.

GROSSMANN. Charcot does not define it so.

¹⁰ Centigrade 37.2 corresponds to Fahrenheit 98.6, the normal body temperature.—Tr.

SAKATOF. Excuse me, excuse me. This is your definition, but Liébault himself told me . . .

THE DOCTOR (*letting go his wrist*). Very good, very good; all I want now is the temperature.

THE STOUT LADY (*pushing forward*). No, excuse me. I agree with Alekseï Vladimirovitch. And here is the very best proof of all for you. When after my illness I lay unconscious, I felt a great necessity upon me to talk. As a general thing I am very silent, but now appeared this impulse to talk, and talk, and they all told me that I talked so that it surprised them all. (*To SAKHATOF.*) However, I believe I interrupted you?

SAKATOF (*with dignity*). Not at all! Go on, pray!

THE DOCTOR. Pulse eighty-two; the temperature has risen three-tenths of a degree.

THE PROFESSOR. Now, that's the very proof that we wanted. It was bound to be so. (*Takes out a notebook and writes in it.*) Eighty-two, wasn't it? And thirty-seven and five. As soon as hypnosis is evoked, then infallibly there is increased action of the heart.

THE DOCTOR. As a physician I can testify that your prediction is fully confirmed.

THE PROFESSOR (*to SAKHATOF*). You were saying? . . .

SAKHATOF. I was going to say that Liébault himself told me that hypnosis is only a special psychical condition augmenting suggestibility.

THE PROFESSOR. That is so, but nevertheless the chief factor is the law of equivalents.

GROSSMAN. Moreover, Liébault is far from being an authority, and Charcot has followed it up on all sides and has proved that hypnosis is produced by a blow, a trauma . . .

SAKHATOF. Well, I don't deny Charcot's labors. I know him too. I only said what Liébault said to me.

GROSSMAN (*growing excited*). In the Salpêtrière there were three thousand patients, and I took the full course.

THE PROFESSOR. Excuse me, gentlemen, this is not to the point.

THE STOUT LADY (*putting herself forward*). I will

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explain it to you in two words. When my husband was sick, all the doctors gave him up . . .

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Come, let us go into the house. Baroness, allow me!

(Exeunt omnes, talking together, and interrupting one another.)

SCENE XIX

The THREE MUZHIKS, FEODOR IVANUITCH, TANYA, *the* OLD MAN-COOK (*on the stove*), LEONID FEODOROVITCH, *and the* BARUINYA

THE BARUINYA (*detains* LEONID FEODOROVITCH *by the sleeve*). How many times I have begged you not to make arrangements in the house! All you know is your own stupidities, but I have charge of the house. You'll infect us all!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Who will? What do you mean? I don't understand you at all.

THE BARUINYA. Here are men sick with diphtheria spending the night in the kitchen, where there's constant coming and going between the house.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. But I . . .

THE BARUINYA. What about you?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. But I don't know what you mean.

THE BARUINYA. As a father of a family, you ought to know. You can't do this.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. I did not think . . . I thought . . .

THE BARUINYA. It's disgusting to hear you. (LEONID FEODOROVITCH *remains silent*. To FEODOR IVANUITCH.) Have them out of here at once! Don't let them stay in my kitchen. This is horrible! No one heeds me, just out of spite. . . . I send them away, and here they are let in here! (*She grows more and more agitated and almost in tears.*) All out of spite! all out of spite. And with my illness. . . . Doctor, doctor! Piotr Petrovitch . . . and he's gone!

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(*Bursts into tears and leaves the kitchen, followed by*
LEONID FEODOROVITCH.)

• SCENE XX

The THREE MUZHIKS, TANYA, FEODOR IVANUITCH, the COOK, and the OLD MAN-COOK (on the stove). (TAB-LEAU. (All stand silent a long time)

THIRD MUZHIK. Now may God have mercy on them! If we don't look out, we shall fall into the hands of the police. In all my life I never went to court. Let's go to some lodging-house, boys.

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*to TANYA*). What *is* to be done?

TANYA. It's no consequence,¹¹ Feodor Ivanuitch. Take them to the coachman's room.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. How take them to the coachman's room? Even as it is, the coachman is complaining; it's full of dogs!

TANYA. Well, then, to the dvornik's room.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. And suppose they find it out?

TANYA. They won't find anything out. Be at ease on that score, Feodor Ivanuitch. Can we drive them out at night? They wouldn't find their way at this time.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. All right; do as you think best; only don't let them be here any longer. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XXI

The THREE MUZHIKS, TANYA, the COOK, and the OLD MAN-COOK. (The muzhiks pick up their wallets)

THE OLD MAN-COOK. Vish! cursed devils! So fat and comfortable. . . . Devils!

THE COOK. Hush you there! Lucky you weren't seen!

TANYA. So come on, little uncles, into the dvornik's room.

¹¹ *Nitchevo* again.

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FIRST MUZHIK. Well, what about our affair? What do you think, for instance, about the signature? Will he put his hand to it? Do you think we may hope?

TANYA. We shall know all about it within an hour.

SECOND MUZHIK. Will you be sharp enough?

TANYA (*laughs*). As God may grant!

Curtain

ACT III

The action takes place the evening of the same day in the small parlor where LEONID FEODOROVITCH'S experiments are always conducted.

SCENE I

LEONID FEODOROVITCH *and the* PROFESSOR

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. What think you, shall we risk the séance with our new medium?

THE PROFESSOR. Certainly. The medium is undoubtedly strong. The main thing to be desired is that the mediumistic séance shall take place this same day with the same persons. Grossmann certainly ought to show himself very susceptible to the influence of the mediumistic energy, and then the connection and unity of the phenomena will be still more evident. You will see that if the medium is as powerful as before, Grossman will vibrate!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. All right, then, I will send for Semyon, and invite those who wish to see it.

THE PROFESSOR. Yes, yes, I only want to make a few notes. (*Takes his note-book and writes.*)

SCENE II

The Same, and SAKHATOF

SAKHATOF. There in Anna Pavlovna's sitting room they are playing whist, but I as a man unattached . . . and moreover interested in the séance, come to join you here. . . . Tell me, will there be a séance?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. There will be, there certainly will be.

SAKHATOF. How will you get along without the mediumistic power of Mr. Kapchitch?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Vous avez la main heureuse. Fancy, that very muzhik whom I told you of, has proved to be an undoubted medium!

SAKHATOF. Indeed! Oh, yes, that is especially interesting.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Yes, yes. After dinner we made a little preliminary test with him.

SAKHATOF. Did you succeed in doing anything and feeling convinced?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Fully, and he proved himself to be a medium of unusual power.

SAKHATOF (*incredulous*). Indeed!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. It seems that it has been remarked long ago in the servants' hall. He sits down to his cup, and the spoon of its own accord hops into his hand. (*To the PROFESSOR.*) Had you heard of that?

THE PROFESSOR. No; I certainly had not heard of that.

SAKHATOF (*to the PROFESSOR*). But still you admit the possibility of such phenomena?

THE PROFESSOR. What phenomena?

SAKHATOF. Well, in general, spiritistic, mediumistic, in general supernatural phenomena?

THE PROFESSOR. The question is what we call supernatural. When a piece of stone—mind you, not a living man—attracted a nail, how did this phenomenon seem to the observer, as natural or supernatural?

SAKHATOF. Yes, assuredly; but such phenomena as the attraction of a magnet constantly repeat themselves.

THE PROFESSOR. It is exactly the same here. The phenomenon repeats itself, as we call it, and we institute an examination of it. Moreover, we subject the phenomena, when once they are investigated, to the laws that are common to other phenomena. Phenomena seem supernatural simply because of the causes of the phenomena are ascribed to the medium himself. But you see that is incredible. The phenomena are not produced by the medium, but by a spiritual energy through the

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medium, and this is a great difference. The whole thing lies in the law of equivalency.

SAKHATOF. Yes, assuredly, but . . .

SCENE III

The Same, and TANYA (enters and stands behind the portière)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Only you must know one thing, that as with Home and Kapchitch, so now with this medium, we must not take anything for granted. It may not prove a success, and it may be even a perfect materialization.

SAKHATOF. Even a materialization? What kind of a materialization can there be?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Such a kind that a dead person, your father, your grandfather, will take you by the hand, give you something, or some one will suddenly be lifted into the air, as happened last time at our house with Alekseï Vladimirovitch.

THE PROFESSOR. Assuredly, assuredly. But the main thing is in the explanation of the phenomena and their subjection to general laws.

SCENE IV

The Same, and the STOUT LADY

THE STOUT LADY. Anna Pavlovna has permitted me to join you.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. We beg of you!

THE STOUT LADY. How fagged Grossmann seems! He can't hold a cup. Did you notice how pale he grew . . . (to the PROFESSOR) the moment he came near it? I noticed it instantly; I was the first to mention it to Anna Pavlovna.

THE PROFESSOR. Undoubtedly the loss of vital energy.

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THE STOUT LADY. Now I tell you this should not be abused. Would you believe it: a hypnotizer suggested to a lady, a friend of mine, Vierotchka Konshina—why, you know her—to stop smoking, and her back began to pain her.

THE PROFESSOR (*tries to begin to speak*). The change of temperature and the pulse evidently show . . .

THE STOUT LADY. Permit me, one minute; I say to her; it is better to smoke than to suffer so with the nerves. Of course, smoking is injurious and I should like to get out of the habit of it, but what's the use, I can't do it. I once went two weeks without smoking, and then I couldn't hold out any longer.

THE PROFESSOR (*again makes an attempt to speak*). Undoubtedly show . . .

THE STOUT LADY. But no, permit me. Only two words: You say that there is a loss of power. And I wanted to say that when I traveled by post, . . . the roads used to be horrible—you don't remember so long ago as that, but I have made the observation, and say what you please, our nervousness all comes from the railways. For example, I can't sleep on the road . . . you might kill me, but I don't go to sleep.

THE PROFESSOR (*again begins, but the STOUT LADY gives him no chance to speak*). The loss of power . . .

SAKHATOF (*smiling*). Yes, yes.

(LEONID FEODOROVITCH *rings*)

THE STOUT LADY. For one, two, three nights I won't sleep a wink, and still I can't go to sleep.

SCENE V

The Same, and GRIGORI

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Please tell Feodor to get everything in readiness for our séance, and summon Semyon, the butler's assistant, Semyon—do you understand?

GRIGORI. I understand.

(*Exit.*)

SCENE VI

LEONID FEODOROVITCH, *the PROFESSOR, the STOUT LADY, and TANYA (hidden)*

THE PROFESSOR (*to SAKHATOF*). The change of temperature and the pulse have shown a loss of vital energy. The same thing will take place also in mediumistic phenomena. The law of the conservation of energy . . .

THE STOUT LADY. Yes, yes; I only wanted to add that I am very glad that a simple muzhik has proved to be a medium. It's beautiful. I always said that the Slavyanophiles . . .

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Meantime let us go into the drawing-room.

THE STOUT LADY. Permit me! I will tell you in two words: the Slavyanophiles are right, but I always said to my husband that such a tendency must not be exaggerated. The golden mean, you know. But how is it possible that everything is good among the people, when I myself have seen . . .

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Would you not like to go into the drawing-room?

THE STOUT LADY. Here is a young boy already taking to drink. I gave him such a scolding. And he was thankful to me afterwards. They are children; and children, I have always maintained, need both love and severity.
(*Exeunt omnes, talking.*)

SCENE VII

TANYA (*alone, comes out from behind the door*)

TANYA. Akh! if it would only succeed! (*She fastens some threads.*)

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SCENE VIII

TANYA and BETSY

BETSY (*enters hastily*). Papa not here. (*Looks at TANYA.*) What are you doing here?

TANYA. Oh, I, Lizavieta Leonidovna, I only came in, I wanted . . . I only happened to come in . . . (*confused*).

BETSY. Isn't the séance to take place here presently? (*Notices TANYA drawing in threads, looks at her sharply, and suddenly bursts out laughing.*) Tanya, it is you who have been doing all these things! Now don't deny it! And it was you that time! It was, honestly, wasn't it?

TANYA. Lizavieta Leonidovna, dear heart!

BETSY (*in rapture*). Akh! how good this is! I never dreamed of such a thing. But why did you do it?

TANYA. Baruinya! dear! don't betray me!

BETSY. Why, no! not for anything! I'm awfully glad! But how do you do it?

TANYA. This is the way I do it: I hide, and when the lights are out I creep out and do it.

BETSY (*points to the thread*). And what is that for? No, you needn't tell me, I understand; you take hold of it . . .

TANYA. Lizavieta Leonidovna, dear heart, I will tell you everything. When I did it before I did it for fun, but now I have some business to accomplish.

BETSY. How? What? What sort of business?

TANYA. Well, you saw how the muzhiks came and wanted to buy land, but your papasha wouldn't sell it them, and wouldn't sign the paper, and gave it back to them. Feodor Ivanuitch says the spirits forbade it. And so I invented a scheme.

BETSY. Akh! how clever you are! Do it, do it. . . . But how were you going to do it?

TANYA. This was what I thought of; as soon as they put out the lights I shall begin to rap, to fling things about, to touch them on the head with the thread, and finally I shall flap the paper on the floor. . . . I have it with me . . . and fling it on the table.

BETSY. Well, what then?

TANYA. Why, they will be surprised. The muzhiks had the paper and suddenly it is here! And then I shall command . . .

BETSY. Yes of course, Semyon is the medium to-day.

TANYA. So I shall command him. . . . (*She can't speak for laughing.*) I shall command him to choke with his hand whoever came near him. Only not your papasha—he wouldn't dare do that—but let him choke any of the others, until he will sign.

BETSY (*laughs*). That isn't the way they do. The medium himself doesn't do anything.

TANYA. No matter; it's all one . . . perhaps even so it will come out all right.

SCENE IX

TANYA and FEODOR IVANUITCH. (*BETSY makes a sign to TANYA and goes away*)

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*to TANYA*). What are you doing here?

TANYA. I came to see you, Feodor Ivanuitch, bat-yushka. . . .

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What is it you want?

TANYA. I came to see you about that affair of mine which I spoke to you about.

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*laughing*). I made the proposal, I made it, and we shook hands on it, but we haven't had a drink yet.

TANYA (*squeals*). Are you telling me the truth?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. I tell you honestly. He says, "I'll consult with the old woman, and then as God wills."

TANYA. Did he say so? (*Squealing.*) Akh! galubchik, Feodor Ivanuitch, I'll pray God for you as long as I live.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, all right, all right! No time for that now! I'm told to get things ready for the séance.

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TANYA. Let me help you. What have you got to get ready?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What? Why, this: a table in the middle of the room, chairs, a guitar, a harmonica. A lamp is not needed, candles.

TANYA (*arranges everything with FEODOR IVANUITCH*). This way? The guitar here, the inkstand here . . . (*sets it down*). This way?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Do they really have Semyon sit here?

TANYA. It must be, you see. They've had him before.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Marvelous! (*Puts on his pince-nez.*) Is he clean?

TANYA. How do I know?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, then, you might . . .

TANYA. What, Feodor Ivanuitch.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Go, get the nail-brush and some Tridas soap . . . you might get them from my room . . . and trim his talons for him and wash him up spick and span.

TANYA. He can wash himself.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, you can at least tell him. And tell him to put on clean linen.

TANYA. Very well, Feodor Ivanuitch. (*Exit.*)

SCENE X

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*alone, sits in a chair*)

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Learned, learned, especially Aleksei Vladimirovitch, he's the professor; but still I have my powerful suspicions of him. Coarse, popular, superstitions are combated: faith in domovoïs, wizards, witches. . . . But if these things are investigated, it all comes to the same superstitions. Well, is it possible that the souls of the dead can talk and play on the guitar? Either some one is fooling people or they are fooling themselves. This business with Semyon one can't make anything out of. (*Examines an album.*) Here is their spiritualistic album. Now, is it possible that they

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can take a photograph of a ghost? Now here's a picture—a Turk and Leonid Feodorovitch sitting together. . . . Marvelous weakness of man.

SCENE XI

FEODOR IVANUITCH *and* LEONID FEODOROVITCH

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*entering*). Tell me, is everything ready?

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*gets up without haste*). All ready. (*Smiling.*) Only I don't know whether your new medium may not put you in an unpleasant position, Leonid Feodorovitch.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. No, Alekseï Vladimir and I have already experimented with him. He's a wonderfully powerful medium.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. I don't know anything about it. But is he clean? You probably haven't taken care to have him wash his hands. That wouldn't do at all.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. His hands? Ah, yes. You think they are not clean?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, he's a muzhik. There'll be ladies here, and Marya Vasilyevna.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Excellent.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. There's another thing I should like to report to you. Timofeï, the coachman, came to me to complain that he couldn't keep clean on account of the dogs.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*arranging objects on the table absent-mindedly*). What dogs?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. A troika of greyhounds was brought to-day for Vasili Leoniduitch, and they've been taken to the coachman's quarters.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*with vexation*). Tell Anna Pavlovna; let her do what she pleases; I have no time for such things.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. But you know her mania. . . .

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Let her do as she pleases. He gives me nothing but annoyance. . . . And I have no time.

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SCENE XII

The Same, and SEMYON (in a sleeveless jacket, enters smiling)

SEMYON. You ordered me to come.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Yes, yes. Show me your hands, Well, they'll do, they'll do. Now, little friend, do as you did before; sit down and give yourself up to your feeling. And put all thoughts out of your mind.

SEMYON. What thoughts should I have? The more one thinks, the worse it is.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. There, there, there! The less the consciousness, the stronger the force. Don't think, but give yourself up to your mood; if you want to sleep, sleep; if you want to walk, walk. Do you understand?

SEMYON. Certainly I understand! It doesn't require much sharpness.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. But above all . . . don't be confused. You yourself might be surprised. You understand, that just as we live, so an invisible world of spirits lives around us here.

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*correcting him*). Invisible consciousnesses: do you understand?

SEMYON (*laughs*). Of course I understand! As you put it, it is very simple.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. You may rise into the air or something else may happen . . . don't be afraid.

SEMYON. Why should I be afraid? All that is possible.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Well, then I'll go and call them all. . . . Is everything ready?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. I think so.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. The slates?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. They're down-stairs; I'll fetch them. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XIII

LEONID FEODOROVITCH and SEMYON

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Now that's very good. So then, don't be confused, and feel perfectly free.

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SEMYON. Shall I take off my jacket? I should feel freer.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Your jacket? No, no; it is not necessary. *(Exit.)*

SCENE XIV

SEMYON *alone*

SEMYON. She has told me to do the same things again, and she's going to fling things around, too. How is it she's not afraid?

SCENE XV

SEMYON and TANYA

TANYA *(enters in her stocking feet, in a dress the color of the wall-paper. SEMYON laughs. TANYA hushes him)*. Sh-h! They'll hear! Here, fasten these matches to your fingers as you did before. *(He fastens them on.)* Tell me, now, do you understand everything?

SEMYON *(bending his fingers)*. First and foremost, dampen the matches. Wave them—that's one. Second, chatter my teeth, this way—that's two. But I've forgotten the third.

TANYA. And the third is the most important point. Now remember: when the paper falls on the table, I will ring the little bell—instantly spread out your arms this way—open them wider, and seize any one. Any one who sits near, seize him! And as soon as you have seized some one, squeeze this way! *(she laughs)* whether lady or gentleman, you know—squeeze, squeeze hard and don't let go, just as if you were asleep; then gnash your teeth or roar this way . . . *(she roars)*, and when I play on the guitar, then pretend to wake up, stretch yourself, you know how,—then you are awake. . . . Will you remember it all?

SEMYON. I'll remember it all, only it's killingly funny!

TANYA. But don't you laugh. Still, if you laugh—there'll be no harm done. They'll think it's all in your

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sleep! Only one thing—don't really go to sleep when they put out the lights.

SEMYON. Never fear, I'll pinch my ears.

TANYA. Now be careful, Semotchka, galubchik! Be sure and do everything; don't be afraid. He'll sign the paper, you'll see. They're coming. . . . (*She creeps under the divan.*)

SCENE XVI

SEMYON and TANYA. *Enter GROSSMANN, the PROFESSOR, LEONID FEODOROVITCH, the STOUT LADY, SAKHATOF, and the BARUINYA. SEMYON stands at the door*

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. We beg your favor, all unbelievers! In spite of the fact that the medium is new and accidental, I expect some remarkable manifestations this time.

SAKHATOF. Very, very interesting!

THE STOUT LADY (*regarding SEMYON*). Mais il est très bien.

THE BARUINYA. As the butler's mushik—yes, but only. . . .

SAKHATOF. Wives always disbelieve in their husband's doings. You don't credit it at all, do you?

THE BARUINYA. Of course not. In Kapchitch, to be sure, there is something special, but God only knows what it is.

THE STOUT LADY. No, permit me, Anna Pavlovna, it is impossible to decide the matter in this way. Before I was married I had a remarkable dream. Dreams, you know, are such things that you never know when they begin, or when they end; and I had such a dream. . . .

SCENE XVII

The Same, VASILI LEONIDUITCH and PETRISHCHEF enter

THE STOUT LADY. And much was revealed to me by that dream. Nowadays such young men as these

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. . . (*She points to PETRISHCHEF and VASILI LEONIDUITCH*) deny everything.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. But I tell you I don't deny anything at all. What?

SCENE XVIII

The Same. Enter BETSY and MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA, and enter into conversation with PETRISHCHEF

THE STOUT LADY. But how is it possible to deny the supernatural? They say it does not accord with reason. Well, may be reason is stupid, then what? You see once on Sadovaya Street—you have heard about it? . . . they had manifestations every evening. My husband's brother, how do you call it . . . not beau frère, but in Russian—not *svyokor*,¹ but something like it—I never can remember those Russian words—why he went there three nights in succession, and still he didn't see anything, and so I say. . . .

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Now tell us, who is it; who is it that's going to remain?

THE STOUT LADY. I, I!

SAKHATOF. I!

THE BARUINYA (*to the DOCTOR*). Aren't you going to remain?

THE DOCTOR. Yes, I must see for once, at least, what Alekseï Vladimirovitch finds in it. It's impossible to deny it without proof.

THE BARUINYA. Then I must really take some this evening?

THE DOCTOR. Take what? . . . Oh, yes, the powders. Yes, take them, if you will. Yes, yes, take them. . . . Yes, I will call.

¹ *Svyokor* means the husband's father. The Russian language is particularly rich in terms expressing all degrees of kinship. There are more than fifty different designations. Thus, a father-in-law from the wife's side is *svókor*; from the husband's, *tyest'*; a sister's husband is *zyat*; a brother's wife is *nyevyestka*; a wife's sister is *svyest'* or *svoyáchinita*; a wife's sister's husband is *svoyák*; a husband's sister, *zoloovka*; a brother-in-law on the husband's side is *murin*, on the wife's side *dyéver*; and so on.—Tr.

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THE BARUINYA. Yes, if you will. (*In a loud voice.*) When you have finished, messieurs et mesdames, you will be kind enough to come to my room to recover from your emotion; and we can finish our whist besides.

THE STOUT LADY. Certainly.

SAKHATOF. Yes, yes. (*Exit ANNA PAVLOVNA.*)

SCENE XIX

The Same, without the BARUINYA

BETSY (*to PETRISHCHEF*). I tell you, you'd better stay. I promise you some extraordinary things. Do you want to wager?

MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA. Why, do you believe in it?

BETSY. This time I do.

MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA (*to PETRISHCHEF*). And do you believe?

PETRISHCHEF. "Your wily vows I trust them not. I trust them not." Well, yes, if Yelisavieta Leonidovna bids me. . . .

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. Let us remain, Marya Konstantinovna. What? I'm thinking up something *épatant*?

MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA. No, don't make me laugh. You know I can't hold in.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH (*aloud*). I will remain.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*sternly*). I will only ask those that remain not to turn this into ridicule. It's a serious matter.

PETRISHCHEF. Do you hear? Well then, we will remain. Vovò, sit here; but look out you don't get scared.

BETSY. Yes, you laugh, but you'll see what'll happen.

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. What? in reality? . . . There's going to be some trick! What?

PETRISHCHEF (*Trembles*). O, I'm afraid, I'm afraid. Marya Konstantinovna, I'm afraid. . . . My legs shake!

BETSY (*laughs*). Hush! (*All take seats.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Sit down, sit down. Semyon, take your place.

SEMYON. I obey. (*Sits on the edge of the chair.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Sit comfortably.

THE PROFESSOR. Sit squarely, in the middle of the chair, perfectly at your ease. (*Places SEMYON in the chair.*)

(BETSY, MARYA KONSTANTINOVNA, and VASILY LEONIDUITCH *roar with laughter.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*raising his voice.*) I will beg those that remain not to make ridicule, and to treat the matter seriously. There might be evil consequences. Vovò, do you hear! If you can't sit quietly, go away.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Hush! (*Conceals himself behind the stout lady.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Alekseï Vladimirovitch, you put him into a trance.

THE PROFESSOR. No, why should I, when Anton Borisovitch is here? He has had far more practice in this sort of thing than I have, and more power . . . Anton Borisovitch!

GROSSMANN. Gentlemen, strictly speaking, I'm not a spiritualist. I have only studied hypnosis. I have studied hypnosis, it is true, in all its known manifestations. But what is called spiritism is entirely unknown to me. When the subject goes into a trance I may expect certain of the phenomena of hypnosis known to me: aboulia or lack of will-power, lethargy, anæsthesia, analgesia, katalepsy, and every kind of suggestion. Here, not these, but a different kind of phenomena are proposed for our investigation; and therefore it would be desirable to know the nature of the expected phenomena, and what scientific significance they have.

SAKHATOF. I fully coincide with Mr. Grossmann's views. Such an exposition would be very interesting.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*to the PROFESSOR*). I think, Alekseï Vladimirovitch, you would not refuse to give us a brief explanation.

THE PROFESSOR. Why, I might expound it, if this is desired. (*To the DOCTOR.*) And will you please take the temperature and the pulse. My exposition will unavoidably be superficial and brief.

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LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Yes, briefly, briefly. . . .

THE DOCTOR. Directly. (*Takes his thermometer and gives it to SEMYON.*) There, my galliard! (*Arranges it.*)

SEMYON. As you wish.

THE PROFESSOR (*getting up and addressing the STOUT LADY, but afterward sitting down.*) Gentlemen: The phenomenon which we are investigating is usually represented on the one side as something new; on the other side as something taking place outside the array of natural conditions. Neither the one nor the other is correct. This phenomenon is not new, but it is as old as the world, and it is not supernatural, but is wholly subjected to the same eternal laws that everything else in existence obeys. This phenomenon is usually defined as communication with the spirit world. This definition is not accurate. According to this definition the spirit world is put in opposition to the material world; this is not correct. There is no such antithesis. The two worlds are so closely connected that there is no possibility of drawing a line of demarcation separating one world from the other. We say: matter is composed of molecules. . . .

PETRISHCHEF. Tiresome matter. (*Whispering, laughter.*)

THE PROFESSOR. (*Pausing, and then continuing.*) Molecules are composed of atoms, but atoms, having no dimensions, are in reality nothing but points for the application of force. That is, strictly speaking, not force, but energy—that same energy which is just as much a unity, just as indestructible as matter. But as matter is one, while its forms are varied, so is it with energy. Till within recent times only four forms of energy, each convertible one into another, have been known to us: dynamic, thermal, electrical, and chemical. But the four forms of energy are far from exhausting all the variety of its manifestations. The aspects of energy are multitudinous in their manifestations, and one of these new, little-known aspects of energy is what we are investigating. I speak of this energy as mediumism. (*Again whispering and laughter in the young folks' corner. The PROFESSOR pauses, and, after glancing round sternly, continues.*) Mediumistic energy has been known to

mankind since very early times: predictions, prognostications, presentiments, visions—and many other things—all these are nothing else than the manifestations of mediumistic energy. But the energy itself has not been recognized as such until the most recent times. Not until there has come to be a knowledge of that medium, the vibrations of which produce mediumistic phenomena, and as the phenomena of light were inexplicable as long as there was no knowledge of the imponderable substance—ether—exactly so the mediumistic phenomena seemed mysterious until the truth now established beyond a question became known, that in the interstices of the particles of the ether exists another imponderable substance still more rarefied than ether, and not subject to the law of the three dimensions. . . . (*Again whispering, laughter, and squeaking. The PROFESSOR again looks around sternly.*)

And just exactly as mathematical calculations have demonstrated beyond dispute the existence of the imponderable ether, giving rise to the phenomena of light and electricity, exactly so the brilliant series of most delicate experiments conducted by the gifted Hermann, by Schmidt, and Joseph Schmatzhofen, unquestionably demonstrate the existence of that substance which fills the universe, and may be called the psychic ether.

THE STOUT LADY. Yes, now I understand. How thankful I am. . . .

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Yes; but is it not possible, Alekseï Vladimirovitch, to—to make it just a little shorter?

THE PROFESSOR (*not heeding him*). Thus a series of strictly scientific experiments and investigations, as I have had the honor of explaining to you, has made clear to us the laws of mediumistic phenomena. These experiments have made clear to us that the submersion of certain individuals into the hypnotic condition, which is different from ordinary sleep only in this, that by the submersion into this sleep the physiological activity is not only not lowered, but is always raised, as we have just seen,—it has been established that the submersion of any subject whatever into this condition infallibly

brings with it certain perturbations in the psychic ether—perturbations perfectly analogous to those produced by the submersion of a solid body into a liquid. These perturbations are what we call mediumistic phenomena. . . . (*Laughter, whispering.*)

SAKHATOF. This is perfectly correct and comprehensible; but allow me to ask, if, as you are pleased to say, the submersion of the medium in a trance produces perturbations of the psychic ether, then why are these perturbations always produced, as is usually presupposed at spiritualistic séances, by the manifestation of the activity of the souls of the departed?

THE PROFESSOR. Well, it is because the particles of this psychic ether are nothing else than the souls of the living, of the dead, and of the unborn, so that every agitation of this psychic ether inevitably produces a certain motion of its particles. These particles are nothing else than men's souls, which by this motion come into mutual communication.

THE STOUT LADY (*to SAKHATOF*). What don't you understand in that? It is so simple. . . . I thank you very, very warmly!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. It seems to me that now all is clear and we may begin.

THE DOCTOR. The young man is in perfectly normal condition: temperature thirty-seven and two; pulse seventy-four.

THE PROFESSOR (*takes out his note-book and writes*). Confirmation of what I have had the honor to communicate may be had in the fact that the submersion in the trance will inevitably, as we have already seen, bring about an increase in temperature and pulse just exactly as in hypnosis.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Yes, yes, excuse me; I only wanted to say to Sergyeï Ivanuitch in answer to his question how we know that the souls of the departed communicate with us:—We know this because the spirit which comes to us tells us in so many words—just as simply as I am speaking now—tells us who he is and why he came, where he is, and whether all is well with him. At the last séance there was a Spaniard, Don

Castillos, and he told us everything. He told us who he is, and when he died, and how hard it is for him because he took part in the Inquisition. Moreover, he communicated to us what was taking place at the very time he was speaking to us, and precisely at the very time when he was talking to us he was to be born again on earth, and so he could not finish the conversation that he had begun with us. . . . But now you will see for yourself. . . .

THE STOUT LADY. Akh, how interesting! Maybe the Spaniard has been born in our house and is a baby now!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Very possible!

THE PROFESSOR. I think it is time we should begin.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. I only wanted to say. . . .

THE PROFESSOR. It is late already.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Very well. Then we may begin. Be kind enough, Anton Borisovitch, to put the medium into the trance.

GROSSMANN. How do you wish that I put the subject to sleep? There are many methods employed. There is Dr. James Braid's method, there is the Egyptian symbol, there is Charcot's method.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. It's all the same, I think.

THE PROFESSOR. It is immaterial.

GROSSMANN. Then I will employ my own method which I demonstrated at Odessa.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Please do so.

(GROSSMANN *waves his hands over SEMYON. SEMYON closes his eyes and stretches.*)

GROSSMANN (*observes*). He is going to sleep. . . . He has gone to sleep. A remarkably rapid approach of hypnosis. Evidently the subject has already entered into the anesthetic condition. A remarkably, extraordinarily impressionable subject, and might be subjected to interesting experiments. . . . (*He sits down, stands up, and sits down again.*) Now you might run a needle through his hand. If you wish. . . .

THE PROFESSOR (*to LEONID FEODOROVITCH*). Do you

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notice what an effect the medium's trance has on Grossmann? He begins to vibrate.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Yes, yes. . . . Now we may put out the lights, may we not?

SAKHATOF. But why is darkness necessary?

THE PROFESSOR. Darkness? Well, because darkness is one of the conditions whereby the mediumistic energy is produced, just as a certain temperature is the condition of certain manifestations of chemical or dynamical energy.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. But not always. To many and to me, they have appeared in candle light, and even in the sunlight.

THE PROFESSOR (*interrupting*). May we put out the lights?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Yes, yes. (*Puts out the lights.*) Gentlemen! now I ask your attention.

(TANYA *creeps out from under the divan, and gets hold of the thread fastened to a bracket.*)

PETRISHCHEF. That Spaniard amused me! How in the middle of the conversation he came head down—how do you say? *piquer une tête*.

BETSY. No, you just wait, and see what will happen!

PETRISHCHEF. All I'm afraid of is that Vovò will grunt like a pig.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Do you want me to? I'll do it. . . .

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Gentlemen! I beg you not to talk, please. . . . (*Silence.*)

(SEMYON *laps his finger, rubs it over his knuckles, and brandishes his hand in the air.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. A light! Did you see the light?

SAKHATOF. A light? Yes, yes, I see it! but allow me. . . .

THE STOUT LADY. Where? where? Akh! I did not see it! There it is! Akh! . . .

THE PROFESSOR (*to* LEONID FEODOROVITCH *in a whisper, pointing to* GROSSMANN, *who is in motion*). You remark how he is vibrating: a twofold force.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*to the* PROFESSOR). That is he!

SAKHATOF. Who is he?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. The Greek Nikolas. It's his light. Isn't that so, Alekseï Vladimirovitch?

SAKHATOF. What is the Greek Nikolas?

THE PROFESSOR. A Greek who used to be a monk at Tsargrad in the time of Constantine and has been visiting us of late.

THE STOUT LADY. Where is he, where is he? I don't see him.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. I can't see him any longer. . . . Alekseï Vladimirovitch, he always seems especially well disposed to you. Question him.

THE PROFESSOR (*in a peculiar voice*). Nikolas, is that you?

(TANYA raps twice on the wall.)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*joyously*). It's he, it's he!

THE STOUT LADY. Aï, aï! I'm going away!

SAKHATOF. Why is it supposed that it is he?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Why, the two raps. An affirmative answer; otherwise he would have kept still! (*Silence.*)

(*Suppressed laughter in the young people's corner.*

TANYA *drops on the table a lamp-shade, a lead-pencil, and a pen-wiper.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*in a whisper*). Do you notice, gentlemen, here is a lamp-shade. And there's something else! A lead-pencil! . . . Alekseï Vladimirovitch, a lead-pencil!

THE PROFESSOR. Good, good! I am watching both him and Grossmann. Do you notice?

(GROSSMANN *stands up and examines the objects that fell on the table.*)

SAKHATOF. Permit me, permit me. I should like to see whether the medium himself did not produce all these things.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Do you think so? . . . Then sit next him, take hold of his hand. But be assured he is asleep.

SAKHATOF (*approaches, hits his head against the thread which TANYA lets down; he bends down terrified*). Yes . . . Ah-h! . . . Strange, strange! (*He approaches SEMYON and takes hold of his elbow. SEMYON roars.*)

THE PROFESSOR (*to LEONID FEODOROVITCH*). Do you notice what an effect Grossmann's presence has? A new phenomenon . . . must make a note of it. . . . (*He hurries out and writes down something; then returns.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Yes . . . but it is impossible to leave Nikolas without an answer; we must begin. . . .

GROSSMANN (*gets up, approaches SEMYON, lifts up his hand and drops it.*) Now it would be interesting to produce contraction. The subject is in complete hypnosis.

THE PROFESSOR (*to LEONID FEODOROVITCH*). Do you see, do you see?

GROSSMANN. If you wish . . .

THE DOCTOR. There, batyushka, permit Alekseï Vladimirovitch to give his orders. . . . The affair is becoming serious.

THE PROFESSOR. Let him be. He is already talking in his sleep.

THE STOUT LADY. How glad I am now that I decided to be present. It's gruesome, but still I'm glad, because I always said to my husband . . .

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. I beg you to keep silent.

(TANYA moves the thread over the STOUT LADY's head.)

THE STOUT LADY. Aï! . . .

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. What was it, what was it?

THE STOUT LADY. He pulled my hair!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*in a whisper*). Don't be afraid, it's nothing; give him your hand. The hand will be cold, but I like that.

THE STOUT LADY (*hides her hand*). Not for the world!

SAKHATOF. Yes, strange, strange!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. He is here and seeks communication. Who wishes to ask any questions?

SAKHATOF. Permit me, may I question him?

THE PROFESSOR. Do us the favor.

SAKHATOF. Do I believe or not?

(TANYA *raps twice*.)

THE PROFESSOR. The answer is affirmative.

SAKHATOF. Permit me, I will ask something more. Have I a ten-ruble note in my pocket?

(TANYA *raps several times and draws the thread along SAKHATOF'S head*.)

SAKHATOF. Akh! . . . (*Seizes the thread and snaps it*).

THE PROFESSOR. I would ask those present not to ask unnecessary or ridiculous questions. It is unpleasant to him.

SAKHATOF. No, permit me, I have a thread in my hand.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. A thread? Hold it. This often happens. Not only a thread but silken knots, very ancient ones.

SAKHATOF. No, but I should like to know where the thread comes from. (TANYA *flings a pillow at him*.) Permit me, permit me. Something soft hit me in the head. Let us have a light . . . there's something here . . .

THE PROFESSOR. We beg you not to disturb the manifestations.

THE STOUT LADY. For God's sake, don't disturb them. I want to ask some questions. May I?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. You may, you may. Ask your questions.

THE STOUT LADY. I wish to ask him concerning my stomach. May I? I wish to ask what I shall take, aconite or belladonna? (*Silence*.)

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(*Whispering among the young people, and suddenly VASILI LEONDUITCH cries like a young baby, ua! ua! Laughter; covering their noses and mouths and snorting, the young ladies with PETRISHCHEF run away.*)

THE STOUT LADY. Akh! it is evident that monk has been born again.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*in a furious, wrathful whisper*). You give us nothing but your absurd nonsense. If you can't behave yourself decently, then go.

(*Exit VASILI LEONIDUITCH.*)

SCENE XX

LEONID FEODOROVITCH, *the* PROFESSOR, *the* STOUT LADY, SAKHATOF, GROSSMANN, *the* DOCTOR, SEMYON, and TANYA. *Darkness and silence.*

THE STOUT LADY. Akh! What a shame! Now we can't ask him any more questions. He was born!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Not at all. That is Vovò's nonsense. But *he* is here. Ask your questions.

THE PROFESSOR. It often happens so; these pleasant-ries and absurdities are a very ordinary phenomenon. I suspect that *he* is here still. However, we can ask. Leonid Feodorovitch, will you?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. No, you, please. This has annoyed me. So unpleasant, this lack of tact. . . .

THE PROFESSOR. Good, good! . . . Nikolas, are you here still?

(*TANYA raps twice and rings the little bell. SEMYON begins to bellow and opens out his arms. He seizes SAKHATOF and the PROFESSOR and chokes them.*)

THE PROFESSOR. Such an unexpected manifestation! An action on the medium himself. Such a thing has never happened before. Leonid Feodorovitch, you take the observations; it's awkward for me. He is choking me. See what Grossmann is doing. Now full attention is required.

(TANYA *flings the muzhiks' paper on the table.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Something fell on the table.

THE PROFESSOR. Look out, and see what fell.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. A paper! a folded sheet of paper! (TANYA *throws down a travelling inkstand.*) An inkstand! (TANYA *throws down a pen.*) A pen!

(SEMYON *roars, and keeps choking the men.*)

THE PROFESSOR (*strangling*). Allow me, allow me, a perfectly new phenomenon! Not the elicited mediumistic energy, but the medium himself is acting! Open the inkstand, and put the pen on the paper,—he will write.

(TANYA *goes behind LEONID FEODOROVITCH, and strikes him on the head with the guitar.*)

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. He struck me on the head. (*He examines the table.*) Look the pen does not write yet, and the paper is folded.

THE PROFESSOR. Go and see what kind of a paper it is, quick! Evidently a dual force . . . his and Grossmann's . . . produces perturbations.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*takes the paper and goes to the door, and immediately returns*). Extraordinary! This paper is the agreement with the peasants which this morning I refused to sign, and gave back to the peasants. Apparently *he* wishes me to sign it.

THE PROFESSOR. Of course, of course! Now ask him.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Nikolas! Do you wish me to?

(TANYA *raps twice.*)

THE PROFESSOR. Do you hear? Evidently, evidently.

(LEONID FEODOROVITCH *takes the pen and goes out.*

TANYA *raps, plays on the guitar and harmonica, and creeps back under the divan.* LEONID FEODOROVITCH *returns.* SEMYON *stretches and coughs.*)

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LEONID FEODOROVITCH. He is waking up. We can have the lights again.

THE PROFESSOR (*hastily*). Doctor, doctor, please, his temperature and pulse! You will see a recrudescence of temperature and heart action manifest itself immediately.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH (*lights the candles*). Well, now, unbelievers?

THE DOCTOR (*going to SEMYON and putting the thermometer into his mouth.*) How now, my gailliard? Tell me, have you had a nap? There, now, get up and give me your hand. (*Looks at his watch.*)

SAKHATOF (*shrugs his shoulders*). I can bear witness that the medium could not have done all that has taken place. But the thread? . . . I should like an explanation of the thread.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. The thread, the thread? There were much more serious phenomena.

SAKHATOF. I don't know. But in any case *je reserve mon opinion*.

THE STOUT LADY. No, how can you say, "*je reserve mon opinion?*" But the youth with the wings? Why, didn't you see him? At first I thought that it was my imagination; but afterwards it was distinct, just as distinct as if it were a real body. . . .

SAKHATOF. I can only speak of what I saw. I did not see that, I did not see it.

THE STOUT LADY. Now why? It was perfectly distinct. And from the left-hand side the monk in black raiment was bending toward him. . . .

SAKHATOF (*walks away*). What an exaggeration.

THE STOUT LADY (*turns to the DOCTOR*). You must have seen it. He rose up from near you. (*The DOCTOR, not heeding, continues to count SEMYON'S pulse. The STOUT LADY addresses GROSSMANN.*) And there was a light from him, especially around his dear little face . . . and the expression was so sweet, so tender, really something heavenly. (*She smiles gently.*)

GROSSMANN. I saw a phosphorescent light, objects changed places, but I perceived nothing else.

THE STOUT LADY. Well, there! You express that so! It comes because you pupils of Charcot's school do not

believe in the life beyond the tomb. But now no one, no one in the world shall disturb my belief in the future life. (GROSSMANN *walks away from her.*) No, no, whatever you may say, this has been one of the happiest occasions of my life. When Sarasate played and now . . . Yes! (No one heeds her. She approaches SEMYON.) Now tell me, my young friend, what you felt. Was it very hard for you?

SEMYON (*laughs*). Rather.

THE STOUT LADY. Still you could endure it?

SEMYON. Rather. (*To LEONID FEODOROVITCH*). Shall I go now?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Go, go!

THE DOCTOR (*to the PROFESSOR*). His pulse is just the same, but his temperature has fallen.

THE PROFESSOR. Fallen? (*Ponders and suddenly settles it in his own mind.*) And that is the way it should have been . . . there should have been a loss of heat! Twofold energy interacting had to produce something in the nature of an interference. Yes, yes!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. I regret that complete materialization should not have taken place, but still . . . Gentlemen, I beg you to go with me to the drawing-room.

THE STOUT LADY. I was especially surprised when he waved his wings, and it was plain to see how he rose.

GROSSMANN (*to SAKHATOF*). If we had stuck to hypnosis only, complete epilepsy might have been produced. Success might be absolute.

SAKHATOF. Interesting but not perfectly convincing. That's all I can say.

ALL GO OUT TALKING TOGETHER

SCENE XXI

LEONID FEODOROVITCH *with the paper.* Enter FEODOR IVANUITCH

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Well, Feodor, what a séance we have had! wonderful! It seems that I must let the peasants have the land on the conditions they want it.

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FEODOR IVANUITCH. How so?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Why not? (*Shows him the paper.*) Fancy, the document which I handed them, made its appearance on the table. I signed it.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. How did it come there?

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Well, it came! (*Exit.*)

(FEODOR IVANUITCH follows him out.)

SCENE XXII

TANYA (*alone; crawls out from under the divan and laughs*)

TANYA. Ye powers!² how frightened I was when he grabbed the thread! (*Squeals.*) Still it succeeded . . . he signed!

SCENE XXIII

TANYA and GRIGORI

GRIGORI. So you've been playing a trick on them, have you?

TANYA. What's that to you?

GRIGORI. Well, do you suppose the baruinya will commend you for it? No, you're full of mischief, but I've got you. I'll tell your roguery if you don't do as I want you to!

TANYA. I won't do as you want me to, and you won't do anything to harm me!

Curtain

² *Batyushki moi, galubchiki!* my little fathers, little doves!

ACT IV

The Stage represents the same Anteroom as in the first Act

SCENE I

TWO FOOTMEN (*in livery*). FEODOR IVANUITCH and GRIGORI

FIRST FOOTMAN (*in gray side-whiskers*). You are the third we've come to to-day. Lucky the reception days are all in the same neighborhood. Yours used to be on Thursdays.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. They changed it to Saturdays so as to have it all come on the same day, the Golovkins, the Grade-von-Grabes . . .

SECOND FOOTMAN. It's great at the Shcherbakofs, for when they have a ball, then they treat the lackeys.

SCENE II

The Same. The PRINCESS and her daughter come downstairs. BETSY accompanies them. The PRINCESS looks into her note-book, then at her watch, and sits on the chest. GRIGORI puts on her overshoes

THE YOUNG PRINCESS. No, now please come! For if you decline Dodo will decline and it will be a failure!

BETSY. I don't know. I must certainly go to the Shubins'. Then the rehearsal.

THE YOUNG PRINCESS. You'll have time. No, please come. *Ne vous fait pas faux bond!* Fedya'll be there and Koko.

BETSY. *J'en ai par-dessus la tête de votre Koko.*

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THE YOUNG PRINCESS. I expected to find him here.
Ordinairement il est d'une exactitude.

BETSY. He will surely be here.

THE YOUNG PRINCESS. Whenever I see you with him, it seems to me that he has just made or is just going to make you a proposal.

BETSY. Yes, probably it will be my fate to go through that. And it's so disagreeable!

THE YOUNG PRINCESS. Poor Koko! He's so desperately in love!

BETSY. *Cessez, les gens.*

(THE YOUNG PRINCESS *sits on the divanchik talking in a whisper.* GRIGORI *puts on her overshoes.*)

THE YOUNG PRINCESS. Till this evening then.

BETSY. I will try to be there.

THE OLD PRINCESS. Tell your papa then that I believe nothing, but that I am coming to see his new medium. Only he must let me know. *Proshchaïte, ma toute belle!* (*Kisses her and goes out with her daughter.* BETSY *goes up.*)

SCENE III

The Two Footmen, FEODOR IVANUITCH, and GRIGORI

GRIGORI. I don't like to put overshoes on old women; they never bend any, they can't see over their bellies; it's different with a young woman; it's pleasant to hold their feet in your hand.

SECOND FOOTMAN. So he would be particular.

FIRST FOOTMAN. It isn't for us to choose.

GRIGORI. Why shouldn't we choose? Aren't we human beings? They think we don't understand; as soon as they begin to talk they look at me and then it's *lay zhong*.

SECOND FOOTMAN. And what does that mean?

GRIGORI. That means in Russian: "don't speak, he understands!" The same way at table; and I do understand. You say there's a difference . . . but there is none.

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FIRST FOOTMAN. A wide difference for any one who knows.

GRIGORI. There's no difference at all. To-day I'm a lackey, but to-morrow maybe I may be living as well as any of them. And lackeys get married; haven't such things been? I must go and have a smoke. (*Exit.*)

SCENE IV

The Same, without GRIGORI

SECOND FOOTMAN. That young man's got gall.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. An empty young fellow, who doesn't know his place; he used to be a clerk . . . but he got spoilt. I advised not to take him, but he pleased the baruinya . . . he looks well when she drives out.

FIRST FOOTMAN. I should like to give him to our count; he'd bring him to his place. Okh! he doesn't like such weather-vanes! If a man's a lackey, let him be a lackey. Do your duty; this sort of pride isn't becoming.

SCENE V

The Same. PETRISHCHEF comes down-stairs and takes out a cigarette

PETRISHCHEF (*in a brown study*). Yes, yes. My second is the same "Ka." Kar-tozh-ka.¹ My whole . . . yes, yes. (KOKO KLINGEL, *with a pince-nez, comes to meet him.*) Ah! Kokosha-Kartosha! Where do you come from?

KOKO KLINGEL. From the Shcherbakofs'. You are forever full of nonsense. . . .

PETRISHCHEF. No, listen, a charade: my first is *kin*, my second is *ka*; my whole drives calves a long distance.

KOKO KLINGEL. Give it up, give it up! and I have no time.

¹ *Kartochka*, visiting-card; *kartoshka*, potato.

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PETRISHCHEF. But where else have you to go?

KOKO KLINGEL. Where else, indeed? To the Ivins', for the chorus, must be there. Then to the Shubins'; then to the rehearsal. Why, you're to be there, aren't you?

PETRISHCHEF. Why, of course. Both at the rehearsal and at the reversal.² You see, I was wild, but now I am both wild and a general.

KOKO KLINGEL. Well, tell me how was yesterday's séance?

PETRISHCHEF. Awfully funny! A muzhik was there, but the main thing was—it all took place in the dark. Vovò squealed like a baby. The Professor made explanations and Marya Vasilyevna gave illustrations. It was such fun! Too bad you weren't there.

KOKO KLINGEL. I'm afraid, *mon cher*, somehow or other you succeed in brazening it out with jests; but it always seems to me that if I should say the least little word, it would be instantly interpreted as a proposal. *Et ça ne m'arrange pas du tout, du tout. Mais du tout, du tout!*

PETRISHCHEF. Even if you should make a proposal with your predicate, nothing would come of it. So come on, let's go to Vovò, and we'll go to the conversal.³

KOKO KLINGEL. I don't understand how you can get along with such an idiot! He's so stupid . . . a perfect booby!

PETRISHCHEF. But I like him. I like Vovò, but . . . "with a strange love" . . . "to him, the path will ne'er be grown with grass."

(Goes to VASILY LEONIDUITCH'S room.)

SCENE VI

The Two FOOTMEN, FEODOR IVANUITCH, and KOKO KLINGEL. BETSY accompanies a LADY down-stairs. KOKO bows significantly

² *I na repetitsi i na morkovetitsi.* Repi is burdock-seed; morkov' is a carrot.

³ *Red'kotitsi; red'ka* is radish, another play on *repetitsi*.

BETSY (*shakes his hand as she passes. To the LADY*). Aren't you acquainted?

THE LADY. No.

BETSY. Baron Klingel . . . Why weren't you here yesterday?

KOKO KLINGEL. I could not. I hadn't the time.

BETSY. Too bad. It was very interesting. (*She laughs.*) You would have seen what manifestations we had. Tell me, how is your charade progressing?

KOKO KLINGEL. Oh, yes. The verses for my second are ready. Nik wrote the poetry and I the music.

BETSY. How does it go, tell me?

KOKO KLINGEL. Let me think how . . . oh, yes. The knight sings to Nanna. (*Sings:*)

*Kak prekrasna natura
Lyet na dushu mnye nadezhda . . .
Nanna, Nanna, na, na, na!*⁴

THE LADY. If my second is *na*, what is my first?

KOKO KLINGEL. My first is *Are*—the name of a wild woman.

BETSY. *Are*—that you see is a wild woman who wants to eat the object of her love. . . . (*Laughs.*) She walks, she grieves, she sings.

My appetite

KOKO KLINGEL (*interrupting*),

Fills me with spite.

BETSY (*catching him up*),

I must have food or perish.
I w-wandered round . . .

KOKO KLINGEL.

But nothing found.

⁴How doth beautiful nature inspire hope in my soul. Nanna-na-na.

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BETSY.

But little hope I cherish!

KOKO KLINGEL.

But there's a raft!

BETSY.

Here comes the craft—
Two generals seek the dry land!

KOKO KLINGEL.

Two generals we are
Beneath one evil star
We drift toward the island.

And then the refrain again:—

*Sud'ba nas svazala
Na ostrof posla-a-la.*

THE LADY. *Charmant!*

BETSY. How stupid it is!

KOKO KLINGEL. That is its very charm.

THE LADY. Who is Are?

BETSY. I am. I act it in costume, but mamma says it is "indecent." But it isn't any more indecent than a ball dress. . . . (*To FEODOR IVANUITCH.*) Tell me, is the messenger from Bourdier's here still?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Yes, he's waiting in the kitchen.

THE LADY. Well, is the word *arena*?

BETSY. You'll see. I don't want to spoil your pleasure.
Au revoir.

THE LADY. *Prashchaïte*—good-by. (*They bow to each other, the LADY goes.*)

BETSY (*to KOKO KLINGEL*). Let us go to mamma.

(*BETSY and KOKO KLINGEL go up-stairs.*)

SCENE VII

FEODOR IVANUITCH, *the* TWO FOOTMEN, and YAKOF

YAKOF (*enters from the butler's pantry with a platter, tea, and pastry; he passes through the anteroom panting; to the FOOTMEN*). My respects to you, my respects to you! (*The FOOTMEN bow to FEODOR IVANUITCH.*) If you would only order Grigori Mikhailuitch to help me. I'm bothered to death getting things ready. . . .
(*Exit.*)

SCENE VIII

The Same, without YAKOF

FIRST FOOTMAN. You have a diligent man in him.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. He's a good fellow, but he doesn't please the baruinya; he's not good enough looking she says. And only yesterday they were pitching into him because he admitted some muzhiks into the kitchen. If only they don't discharge him. But he's a fine fellow!

SECOND FOOTMAN. What muzhiks?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. They came from our village in Kursk to buy land; it was night; they are townsmen of ours. One of them is the father of the butler's muzhik. Well, they took them into the kitchen. And it so happened there was some mind-reading going on; they had hidden something in the kitchen, all the folks came down, the baruinya caught sight of them—there was a row. "Why," says she, "these men may be infected, and here they are in the kitchen!" . . . She's in great fear of this infection.

SCENE IX

The Same, and GRIGORI

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Go on, Grigori, help Yakof Ivanuitch; I'll stay here alone. But he won't have time if he's alone.

GRIGORI. He's clumsy; that's why he doesn't have time.
(*Exit.*)

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SCENE X

The Same, without GRIGORI

FIRST FOOTMAN. What is this new-fangled thing that's just come . . . these infections? . . . So your mistress is afraid of them, is she?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Worse than fire! It keeps us busy here all the time, fumigating, scrubbing, and sprinkling.

FIRST FOOTMAN. That's why the air seemed to me so close here. (*With animation.*) There's nothing like the troubles that come from these infections. It's perfectly disgusting! They even forget God! Now our barin's sister, the Princess Mosolova, lost her daughter. What happened? Why, neither her father nor her mother went into the room, and so they didn't say good-by to her. And the daughter was crying, and called them to come and say good-by . . . they wouldn't go. The doctor found some infection. But there were people to look after her . . . her maid and her nurse, and nothing happened to them . . . both of them are alive!

SCENE XI

The Same, VASILY LEONIDUITCH, and PETRISHCHEF (who enter with cigarettes)

PETRISHCHEF. Come along; I just want to catch Kokosha-Kartosha.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. Your Kokosha's a blockhead. I tell you, I can't endure him. He's a regular good-for-nothing; a perfect chump! He has nothing to do but wander round. What?

PETRISHCHEF. Well, just wait then; I'll say good-by to him.

VASILY LEONIDUITCH. All right. I'll go and look at the dogs, in the coachman's room. One of the curs is so ugly the coachman says he almost ate him up. What?

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PETRISHCHEF. Which ate which? The coachman wouldn't eat the dog, would he?

VASILI LEONIDUITCH. You're forever . . . joking. . . .
(*Puts on his coat and exit.*)

PETRISHCHEF. Ma-kin-tosh, Ka-tozh-ka . . . Yes—yes.
(*Goes up-stairs.*)

SCENE XII

The TWO FOOTMEN, FEODOR IVANUITCH, and YAKOF
(*who runs across the stage at the beginning and end of the scene*)

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*to* YAKOF.) What is it now?

YAKOF. No sandwiches! I said . . . (*Goes out.*)

SECOND FOOTMAN. Then one time our young master⁵ took sick. They immediately sent him to a hotel with his nurse, and he died there without his mother.

FIRST FOOTMAN. Well, they have no fear of the sin. I suppose there is no getting away from God.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. I think so too.

(*YAKOF runs up-stairs with tartinkas.*)

FIRST FOOTMAN. And notice this; if we had to be so afraid of all men we should have to shut ourselves up within four walls, just as in a prison, and stay there!

SCENE XIII

The Same, and TANYA; *then* YAKOF

TANYA (*bows to the* FOOTMEN). How are you? (*The* FOOTMEN *bow.*) Feodor Ivanuitch, I should like to say two words to you.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, what is it?

TANYA. Feodor Ivanuitch, the little muzhiks have come back. . . .

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Well, what of it? I gave their paper to Semyon. . . .

⁵ *Barchúk*; also *bárchinok*, popular diminutive of *baritch*, the son of a *barin*.

TANYA. I have given the paper back to them, and I can't begin to tell you how grateful they are. Now all they want is to pay over the money.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Where are they?

TANYA. Yonder, standing by the doorsteps.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. All right. I'll give their message.

TANYA. I have one more request, batyushka, Feodor Ivanuitch.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. What is it?

TANYA. Now, Feodor Ivanuitch, there's no reason for me to stay here any longer. Ask that I may be dismissed.
(YAKOF comes running in.)

FEODOR IVANUITCH (to YAKOF). What is it this time?

YAKOF. Another samovar, and oranges.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Ask the housekeeper for them.
(YAKOF hurries away. To TANYA.) What was that you were saying?

TANYA. Why, you don't need to ask. My affair is now all settled.

YAKOF (running back). Very few oranges.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Give them what there are.
(YAKOF runs off.) You have not chosen a good time; why, you see what a bustle . . .

TANYA. But you know, Feodor Ivanuitch, there'll never be any end to the bustle, if you wait forever . . . you know it as well as I do. But my affair is for all time. Now, batyushka, Feodor Ivanuitch, you have been so good to me, be my real father, choose a convenient little time and tell them. Otherwise she'll be angry and not give me my billet.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. But why are you in such a hurry?

TANYA. Why, Feodor Ivanuitch, my affair is all decided. I should like to visit mamenka, and then my god-mother, and get things ready. . . . And the wedding is to take place at Krasnaya-gorka. Do tell her, batyushka, Feodor Ivanuitch.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Go away! This is not the place!

(An elderly barin comes down-stairs and silently takes his departure with the SECOND FOOTMAN. Exit TANYA.)

SCENE XIV

FEODOR IVANUITCH, FIRST FOOTMAN, *and* YAKOF

YAKOF (*enters*). Now, Feodor Ivanuitch, this is a crying shame! She wants to dismiss me now. "You break everything," she says, "you forget Firka, and contrary to my wishes you admit muzhiks into the kitchen." You know yourself I knew nothing whatever about it. Only Tatyana said to me, "Take them into the kitchen," and I didn't know whose order it was.

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Tell me, did she say so?

YAKOF. She just said so. Do stand up for me, Feodor Ivanuitch! One just gets his family nicely established and then has to lose his place, and it's not so easy to find another. Feodor Ivanuitch, please!

SCENE XV

FEODOR IVANUITCH, *the* FIRST FOOTMAN, *and the* BARUINYA, *who accompanies an old* COUNTESS *with false hair and teeth. The* FIRST FOOTMAN *puts the* COUNTESS'S *cloak on for her*

THE BARUINYA. It is certainly so. I am truly touched.

THE COUNTESS. If my health were not so bad, I would come and see you oftener.

THE BARUINYA. Truly try Piotr Petrovitch. He is brusque, but there's no one like him for calming one; everything with him is so simple and clear.

THE COUNTESS. No, I'm used to mine now.

THE BARUINYA. Be careful!

THE COUNTESS. *Merci, mille fois merci.*

SCENE XVI

The SAME, *and* GRIGORI, *who comes rushing in from the pantry in excitement, with disheveled hair. Behind him* SEMYON *is visible*

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SEMYON. Don't you dare come near her.

GRIGORI. You villain. I'll teach you to strike me! Oh, you wretch!

THE BARUINYA. What does this mean? Do you imagine you are in a tavern?

GRIGORI. I can't live on account of this coarse muzhik.

THE BARUINYA (*in vexation*). You've lost your senses! don't you see! (*To the COUNTESS.*) *Merci, mille fois merci! A mardi.*

(*The COUNTESS and FIRST FOOTMAN take their departure.*)

SCENE XVII

FEODOR IVANUITCH, *the* BARUINYA, GRIGORI, and SEMYON

THE BARUINYA (*to* GRIGORI). What does this mean?

GRIGORI. Even if I do fulfil the duties of a lackey, I have my proper pride, and I don't allow every muzhik to lay hands on me.

THE BARUINYA. What happened?

GRIGORI. That Semyon of yours has been putting on airs because he has sat down with gentlemen. He wants to get into a fight.

THE BARUINYA. What do you say? What for?

GRIGORI. God only knows.

THE BARUINYA (*to* SEMYON). What does this mean?

SEMYON. Why is he pursuing her?

THE BARUINYA. Tell me what has taken place between you?

SEMYON (*smiling*). Well, he's all the time following after Tanya, the chambermaid, and she won't have it. So I pushed him aside with my hand . . . this way, very gently.

GRIGORI. Fine way of pushing one aside; he almost broke my ribs and he tore my dress-coat. And then what did he say? "The force came over me," said he, "just as it did last night." And he began to pound me!

THE BARUINYA (*to* SEMYON). How do you dare fight in my house?

FEODOR IVANUITCH. Allow me to inform you, Anna Pavlovna, that Semyon has an affection for Tanya and they have just become engaged; but Grigori—I must tell the truth—doesn't behave well toward her, not honorably. And Semyon, I imagine, was indignant with him.

GRIGORI. Not at all. It was out of spite because I discovered their rascality.

THE BARUINA. What rascality?

GRIGORI. Why, at the séance. All the manifestations last night were performed, not by Semyon, but by Tanya. I myself saw her creeping out from under the divan.

THE BARUINYA. What is that? . . . creeping out from under the divan?

GRIGORI. I can give you my word of honor. She also got the document and threw it on the table. If it had not been for her, the paper would not have been signed, and the land would not have been sold to the muzhiks.

THE BARUINYA. You saw it yourself?

GRIGORI. With my own eyes. Have her called, she can't deny it!

THE BARUINYA. Call her.

(Exit GRIGORI).

SCENE XVIII

The Same, without GRIGORI. Behind the scenes, a confusion. The SWISS's voice: "You can't go in, you can't go in!" The SWISS appears, the THREE MUZHIKS crowd past him, the SECOND MUZHIK in advance; the THIRD MUZHIK trips, falls, and puts his hand on his nose

THE SWISS. You can't go in, go away!

SECOND MUZHIK. Why, there's no need of a fuss. We don't mean any harm, do we? We want to pay our money.

FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, as the business of putting his signature to the document has been done, all we have to do is to pay over the money and offer our thanks!

THE BARUINYA. Just wait, wait with your thanks! It

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was all a fraud. It isn't done with yet! The land hasn't been sold yet . . . Leonid! call Leonid Feodorovitch!
(*Exit the Swiss.*)

SCENE XIX

The Same, and LEONID FEODOROVITCH (who starts to come in, but on seeing his wife and MUZHIKS tries to go back)

THE BARUINYA. No, no, please come here! I told you that you had no business to sell that land on credit, and every one told you the same thing. But you have been cheated, like the stupidest of men!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. How so? I don't understand where the deception is.

THE BARUINYA. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Your hair is gray, and yet you allow yourself to be cheated and turned to ridicule like a boy! You begrudge your son three hundred paltry rubles required by his social position, and you yourself, like a fool, are cheated out of thousands.

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Calm yourself, Annette.

FIRST MUZHIK. All we wanted was to pay over the sum, of course. . . .

THIRD MUZHIK (*takes out the money*). Let us go, for Christ's sake!

THE BARUINYA. Wait, wait!

SCENE XX

The Same, GRIGORI and TANYA

THE BARUINYA (*sternly to TANYA*). Yesterday evening were you in the parlor at the time of the séance?

(TANYA, *sighing, looks at* FEODOR IVANUITCH, LEONID FEODOROVITCH, *and* SEMYON.)

GRIGORI. No shuffling will avail now—when I myself saw . . .

THE BARUINYA. Speak, were you there? I know all. Confess! I won't do anything to you. I only want to convince him (*indicating* LEONID FEODOROVITCH). Did you throw the paper on the table?

TANYA. I don't know what answer to give. The only thing is whether I can be permitted to go home or not.

THE BARUINYA (*to* LEONID FEODOROVITCH). There, you see what a fool they make of you.

SCENE XXI

The Same; enter BETSY at the beginning of the scene and stands unobserved

TANYA. Let me go home, Anna Pavlovna.

THE BARUINYA. No, dear. You see, maybe you have done damage amounting to several thousands. Land has been sold which should not have been sold.

TANYA. Let me go, Anna Pavlovna.

THE BARUINYA. No, you are responsible. Such tricks cannot be allowed. We shall put it into the hands of the law.

BETSY (*interfering*). Let her go, mamma. And if you want to sue her, then you'll have to sue me too. She and I did that together last evening.

THE BARUINYA. Well, then, you may know, if you had anything to do with it, there could be only mischief in it.

SCENE XXII

The Same, and the PROFESSOR

THE PROFESSOR. How are you, Anna Pavlovna? How do you do, young lady?⁶ I am bringing you a report, Leonid Feodorovitch, from the Thirteenth Congress of Spiritualists, at Chicago. A wonderful discourse by Schmidt!

⁶ *Baruishnya.*

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Ah, very interesting.

THE BARUINYA. I will tell you something far more interesting. It seems that this silly girl has played a trick on you and my husband. Betsy tells on herself, but that is in order to plague me; but an illiterate servant-girl has duped you, and you believe her! Last evening none of your manifestations were by spirits, but this girl (*pointing to TANYA*) did them all!

THE PROFESSOR (*taking off his overcoat*). What is that?

THE BARUINYA. Yes, indeed. She played the guitar in the dark, and struck my husband on the head, and played all sorts of stupid tricks on you; and has just confessed that she did.

THE PROFESSOR (*smiling*). But what does that prove?

THE BARUINYA. It proves that your mediumism is rubbish, that is what it proves!

THE PROFESSOR. Because this maid wanted to deceive, hence mediumism is rubbish, as you may please to express it. (*Smiling.*) Strange conclusion! Very possibly this maid intended to deceive; it often happens so. Maybe she even did something; but what she did she did: but what came from the mediumistic energy came from the mediumistic energy. It is even perfectly likely that what this maid did call forth, elicited, so to speak, the manifestation of the mediumistic energy, gave it definite form.

THE BARUINYA. Another lecture! . . .

THE PROFESSOR (*severely*). You say, Anna Pavlovna, that this maid, and possibly, also, this amiable young lady, did something; but the light which we all saw, and, in the first case, the fall in temperature, and in the second the rise in temperature, and Grossmann's excitement and vibration . . . tell me, was that also done by this maid? These are facts, . . . facts, Anna Pavlovna. No, Anna Pavlovna, there are things which must be investigated and fully understood in order to speak about them . . . things too serious, quite too serious . . .

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. How about the child which Marya Vasilyevna, and I too, saw? . . . This maid couldn't have done that.

THE BARUINYA. You think that you have brains! . . . But you are a fool!

LEONID FEODOROVITCH. Well, I'm going . . . Alekseï Vladimirovitch, come to my room.

(Exit into his private room.)

THE PROFESSOR *(shrugging his shoulders, follows him)*. Yes, we are still far away from Europe!

SCENE XXIII

The BARUINYA, the THREE MUZHIKS, FEODOR IVANUITCH, TANYA, BETSY, GRIGORI, SEMYON, and YAKOF (who enters)

THE BARUINYA *(calling to her husband)*. They cheat him like a fool! And he can't see a thing. *(To YAKOF.)* What do you want?

YAKOF. For many persons do you wish me to lay the table?

THE BARUINYA. How many? . . . Feodor Ivanuitch, take the silver from him. Then away with him! He's to blame for everything. This man will drive me into the grave. Yesterday he almost starved the poor little dog to death, and she had never done a thing to him. Nor was that sufficient for him; he let these infected muzhiks into the kitchen, and here they are again. He's to blame for everything! Away with him, instantly! away with him! Settle his accounts, settle his accounts. *(To SEMYON.)* And if you allow yourself to make such a commotion in my house again, I'll give you a lesson, you nasty muzhik!

THE SECOND MUZHNIK. Well, now, if he's a nasty muzhik, there's no need of keeping him; give him his wages, and that's the end of it.

THE BARUINYA *(as she hears him, examines the THIRD MUZHNIK)*. Just look at him; he has an eruption on his nose, an eruption! He is sick, he is a reservoir of infection. Why, I declared last evening that they were not to be admitted, and here they are again. Drive them out!

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FEODOR IVANUITCH. Tell me, shall we not take their money?

THE BARUINYA. Their money? . . . Take their money, but drive them away, entirely away, this very instant! He's perfectly putrid!

THE THIRD MUZHNIK. You're quite mistaken, matushka, by God, quite. Ask my old woman, I tell you, whether I'm putrid. I'm as smooth as a mirror, I tell you. . . .

THE BARUINYA. And still he talks! . . . Away, away with you! All out of spite! No, I can't bear, I can't bear it! . . . Send for Piotr Petrovitch. (*Runs out sobbing.*)
(*Exeunt YAKOF and GRIGORI.*)

SCENE XXIV

The Same, without the BARUINYA, YAKOF, and GRIGORI

TANYA (*to BETSY*). My dear young lady, sweetheart,⁷ what am I to do now?

BETSY. It's all right, it's all right. Just go home with them. I'll attend to it. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XXV

FEODOR IVANUITCH, *the* THREE MUZHIKS, TANYA, and *the* SWISS

THE FIRST MUZHNIK. How is it now, worthy sir, about the receipt of the money?

THE SECOND MUZHNIK. Let us go now!

THE THIRD MUZHNIK (*fidgeting with the money*). If I had known, I wouldn't, for the world, have undertaken this job. It dries one up worse than a fever.

FEODOR IVANUITCH (*to the Swiss*). Bring them to my room; the abacus is there. And I'll receive the money there, too. Go, go!

⁷ *Baruishnya, galubushka.*

THE SWISS. Let us go, then, let us go!

FEODOR IVANUITCH. But thank Tanya. If it had not been for her, you wouldn't have had your land.

THE FIRST MUZHIK. Reely, just as she proposed to do, she carried it out.

THE THIRD MUZHIK. She has made men of us! What should we have done otherwise? We have little land—not room for cattle, not even for a hen on it! Good-by,⁸ Miss Cleverness! When you come to the village, come and eat honey at my house.

THE SECOND MUZHIK. Just let me get home, I'll set about the wedding and brew beer. Only come!

TANYA. I'll come, I'll come! (*Squeals.*) Semyon, isn't this nice? (*Exeunt the MUZHIKS.*)

SCENE XXVI

FEODOR IVANUITCH, TANYA, and SEMYON

FEODOR IVANUITCH. God bless you. Now look here, Tanya, when you have a home of your own I'll come and visit you. Will you receive me?

TANYA. You dear fellow,⁹ we will receive you like a father!

(*Hugs and kisses him.*)

Curtain

⁸ *Prashchevaï* for *prashchäi*.

⁹ *Galubchik tui moi*, little pigeon, thou mine.

THE LIVE CORPSE

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

FYÓDOR VASILYÉVITCH PROTÁSOF (FÉDYA).

YELIZAVYÉTA ANDRÉYEVNA PROTÁSOVA (LIZA), his Wife. (*A woman of thirty, elegantly but simply gowned, with refined manners, slender, dainty, sensitive, naïve.*)

MISHA (MIKHAÏL), their son.

ANNA PAVLOVNA, LIZA's Mother.

SASHA (ALEXANDRA), LIZA's Sister, a young girl.

VIKTÓR MIKHAÏLOVITCH KARÉNIN (*Athletic, handsome, fresh-faced man, elegant, thirty years old, he speaks slowly and deliberately.*)

ANNA DMÍTRIEVNA KARÉNINA, his Mother. (*Grande dame of fifty, but made up to seem younger. Interlards her conversation with French.*)

Prince SERGYEÏ DMITRIYEVITCH ABRÉZKOF. (*A dandified bachelor of sixty, smooth-shaven but with mustache: a retired Officer very dignified and melancholy.*)

MASHA (MASHKA or MÁRYA), a young and pretty Gypsy-girl.

IVÁN MAKÁROVITCH, an old Gypsy, her Father.

NATASHA IVÁNOVNA, an old Gypsy Woman, her Mother.

OFFICER.

MUSICIAN.

FIRST GYPSY.

SECOND GYPSY.

GYPSY GIRL [KATYA].

GYPSY GIRL [TSUIGANKA].

Mixed Chorus of Gypsies.

MIKHAÏL ANDRÉYEVITCH AFRÉMOF.

STÁKHOF,

BUTKYÉVITCH, } Friends of FÉDYA's.

KOROTKÓF,

IVÁN PETROVITCH ALEKSANDROF.

Doctor VOZNESENSKY, KARÉNIN's Secretary.

PYETUSHKÓF, an Artist.

MAGISTRATE'S CLERK.

ARTEMYEF.

MESSANGER.

WAITER in Private Room.

YOUNG LAWYER.

WAITER in Restaurant.

PETRUSHIN, Lawyer.

PROPRIETOR of Restaurant.

LADY.

POLICEMAN.

LACKEY to the Abrezkofs.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE.

OFFICER.

MYÉLNIKOF.

JUROR.

PROTÁSOF's NURSE [TRIFÓNOVNA]. (*A fresh, sensible old woman of fifty, who had been LIZA's nurse and is devoted to the children.*)

PROTÁSOF's MAID [DUNYASHA].

AFREMOF's VALET.

The KARÉNINS' LACKEY.

The PROTÁSOFs' VALET.

Witnesses at Court, Judges, Spectators.

Note.—As a rule, there are no accents in Russian. In the text they are occasionally placed on the proper syllables, merely for convenience and reminder of pronunciation.—Tr.

THE LIVE CORPSE

(1900)

ACT ONE

First Tableau

The action takes place in the Capital, in Protasof's apartment. The stage represents a small dining-room.

SCENE I

ANNA PÁVLOVNA, a stout, gray-haired lady, tightly laced,
is seated at the tea-table, alone.

SCENE II

ANNA PÁVLOVNA and NURSE (*with tea-pot*)

NURSE. Can you give me a little water?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Why, yes—— How's Mishetchka?

NURSE. Well, he's restless. There's nothing worse than for a lady to suckle her own child. If she's full o' tribulations, then the baby suffers. What sort o' milk will it get when the mother lies awake o' nights crying?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Well, she seems to have become calmer now.

NURSE. Queer kind o' calm. It's sad to see her. She's been writing something and crying. (*Enter Sasha.*)

SCENE III

ANNA PÁVLOVNA, NURSE and SASHA

SASHA (*to the NURSE*). Liza wants you.

NURSE. I'm coming, I'm coming. (*Exit NURSE.*)

SCENE IV

ANNA PÁVLOVNA *and* SASHA

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Nurse says she's crying all the time. Why is it she can't control herself?

SASHA. It's so strange of you, mama! Here she's leaving her husband, the father of her child, and you expect her to be calm!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Not calm—but what's done is done. If I, her mother, not only give my consent but am glad that my daughter is leaving her husband, it must be he's to blame. We should be glad and not sorry that one can get rid of such a bad man—throw overboard such a golden treasure!

SASHA. Mama, why do you speak so? Now you know it isn't true. He's not a bad man, but quite the opposite, a remarkable, a remarkable man, in spite of his weaknesses.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Well; he certainly is a remarkable man—just as soon as he gets money into his hands—his own or someone else's . . .

SASHA. Mama, he has never taken anyone else's.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. All the same—his wife's.

SASHA. Why, you know he gave his whole property to his wife.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. It's well he did give it to her; he knew if he didn't he would squander it all.

SASHA. Squander it or not, I only know that one ought not to leave her husband and especially when he's such a man as Fedya.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. According to you, one must wait while he's squandering everything and bringing home his Gypsy mistresses!

SASHA. He has no mistresses.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. This is the mischief of it—he's bewitched every one of you. Not me, though, not by a long chalk! I see through him and he knows it. If I had been in Liza's place I'd got rid of him a year ago, instead of waiting till now.

SASHA. How can you speak of this so lightly?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. You're mistaken, not lightly. It's no light thing for me, her mother, to see my daughter divorced. I assure you it's no light thing at all. But it's far better than to have her young life ruined. No, I thank God she has now made the decision and that all is ended.

SASHA. May be it is not ended.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. If only he'd grant her a divorce.

SASHA. What good would that be?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. This good—that she's young and might be happy.

SASHA. Oh mama, that is dreadful—what you say! Liza can't fall in love with another man.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Why can't she? Supposing she were free. Men are to be found a thousand times better than your Fedya and any one of them would be glad to marry Liza.

SASHA. Mama, that's not right! I know you mean Viktor Karénin.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. And pray why not Karénin. He's been in love with her these ten years—and she loves him.

SASHA. Yes, but not as a husband. They've been friends since they were children.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. We know that friendship! If only there were no obstacle.

SCENE V

ANNA PÁVLOVNA and SASHA. *Enter the MAID*

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. What is it?

MAID. The lady sent the dvornik with a note to Viktor Mikhaïlovitch.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. What lady?

MAID. Yelizavyeta Andreyevna.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Well, what did he say?

MAID. Viktor Mikhaïlovitch sent word that he would come immediately.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA (*in astonishment*). Why, we were just talking about him! Only I don't understand the reason for it. (*To SASHA*) You don't know, do you?

SASHA. Maybe I know and maybe I don't.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Always this secrecy!

SASHA. Liza is coming; she will tell you.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA (*Shaking her head. To the MAID*). Here, the samovár wants to be heated up: take it, Dun-yasha.

(*The MAID takes the samovár and exit.*)

SCENE VI

ANNA PÁVLOVNA and SASHA

ANNA PÁVLOVNA (*to SASHA who has risen and is about to leave the room*). It has turned out as I predicted it would! She has just sent for him.

SASHA. Maybe she had an entirely different reason for sending for him.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. What other reason, I'd like to know.

SASHA. Now—at this moment—Karénin is as little interest to her as Trifónovna.¹

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Well, you'll see. Perhaps I don't know her! She is summoning him: she wants consolation.

SASHA. Oh, mama, how little you know her if you think . . .

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Yes, you just wait. I am very, very glad.

SASHA. We shall see. (*Begins to hum and exit.*)

SCENE VII

ANNA PÁVLOVNA alone

ANNA PÁVLOVNA (*Shakes her head and mutters*). It's fine! let him come. Yes . . .

¹ The NURSE.

SCENE VIII

ANNA PÁVLOVNA *and the MAID (Entering)*

MAID. Viktor Mikhaïlovitch is here.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. What did you say? Oh show him in and tell your mistress.

(*Exit MAID by inner door.*)

SCENE IX

ANNA PÁVLOVNA *and KARÉNIN*

KARÉNIN (*Enters and greets ANNA PÁVLOVNA*). Yelizavyeta Andreyevna sent me a note asking me to come. But I was intending to come to see you this very afternoon, so that I am very glad . . . Is Yelizavyeta Andreyevna well?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. She's well. The baby's a bit under the weather. She'll be in directly. (*In a melancholy tone*) Yes, yes, this is a trying time. . . . I suppose you know all about it?

KARÉNIN. I do. You know I was here day before yesterday when the letter from him arrived. But do you mean the matter has been irrevocably settled?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. I certainly do. Of course it is! To live over again all that we've passed through would be horrible!

KARÉNIN. Yes, here's where one deliberates ten times before one cuts once. It is very cruel to sever living flesh.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Of course, it's cruel. But you see their marriage long ago was frayed. So that severing it was less painful than it would seem. He himself realizes that after all that's happened he can't possibly return.

KARÉNIN. How is that?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Well, how in the world would you expect after all his rascalities, after his swearing that such misconduct would not be repeated and that if he

did so again he himself would renounce all his marital rights and give her full freedom. . . .

KARÉNIN. Yes, but what kind of freedom has any woman tied down by marriage?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Divorce. He agreed to a divorce and we insist upon it.

KARÉNIN. Yes, but Yelizavyeta Andreyevna loved him so. . . .

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Oh her love has been subjected to such a severe strain that scarcely a trace of it is left: His drunkenness and deceptions and infidelities! How can she love such a husband?

KARÉNIN. For love everything is possible.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Love, you say, but how could **one** love such a man—a dishrag, on whom one can not place the least dependence! Why only just now . . . (*Glances at the door and speaks hurriedly*) Their affairs are at sixes and sevens; everything is mortgaged; no money to pay anyone. At the last moment uncle sends him two-thousand to meet the interest. He takes this money and disappears. His wife is left with a sick baby, not knowing what to do and finally receives a letter—to send him his underwear and things . . .

KARÉNIN. Yes, yes, I know.

SCENE X

ANNA PÁVLOVNA, KARÉNIN, *Enter LIZA and SASHA*

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Here is Viktor Mikhaïlovitch in answer to your summons.

VIKTOR MIKHAÏLOVIRCH. Yes; I was somewhat delayed. (*Exchanges greetings with the sisters.*)

LIZA. Thank you for coming. I have a great favor to ask of you. I have no one else to turn to.

KARÉNIN. Anything I can do . . .

LIZA. Well, you know the whole story . . .

KARÉNIN. Yes, I know.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Now I will leave you together. (*To SASHA*) Come, let us leave them alone.

SCENE XI

LIZA and KARÉNIN

LIZA. Yes, he wrote me a letter to the effect that all was ended (*restraining her tears*). I was so insulted, so . . . well, in a word I agreed to a separation . . . and I replied to him that I was willing to let him go.

KARÉNIN. And now you regret it?

LIZA. Yes, I felt that it was shameful of me, quite impossible. You see, anything is better than to be separated from him. Well . . . in a word . . . give him this letter. Please Viktor . . . give him this letter, and say . . . and bring him back.

KARÉNIN. Very good! (*astonished*) Yes, but how can I?

LIZA. Tell him that I beg him to forget it all, and come home. I might simply mail him the letter. But I know him: his first impulse, as always, will be good and then there will be some objection and he will reconsider and not do as he would like . . .

KARÉNIN. I will do what I can.

LIZA. Are you surprised at my asking this . . . of you especially?

KARÉNIN. N-no . . . well, I must tell the truth . . . yes, I am surprised.

LIZA. But you are not angry? . . .

KARÉNIN. How can I be angry at you?

LIZA. I asked you because I know that you are fond of him.

KARÉNIN. Of him and you too. You know that. And I love him not for his own sake but for yours. And I am grateful to you for putting this confidence in me. I will do what I can.

LIZA. I knew you would. I am going to tell you the whole story. This morning I went to Afremof's to find out where he is. I was informed that he had joined the Gypsies. I am afraid that is what has infatuated him. I know that if he is not rescued in time he will be hopelessly infatuated. Now this must be done. So will you go?

KARÉNIN. Of course I will, immediately.

LIZA. Do go! Find him and tell him and all is forgotten, that I am expecting him.

KARÉNIN (*rising*). But where shall I look for him?

LIZA. He is with the Gypsies. I went there myself. I got as far as the porch; I was going to hand him my letter; then I changed my mind and decided to ask you . . . This is the address. Now then tell him that he must come back, that nothing has been done, that all is forgotten. Do this for love of him, for friendship for him.

KARÉNIN. I will do all I can.

(*He hesitates, then bows and exit.*)

SCENE XII

LIZA *alone*

LIZA. I can not, I can not. Anything is better than . . . I can not.

SCENE XIII

LIZA. *Enter SASHA*

SASHA. Now tell me, did you send him?

LIZA. (*Makes a sign in the affirmative with her head*).

SASHA. And he consented to go?

LIZA. He certainly did.

SASHA. Why send him? I don't understand.

LIZA. Who else?

SASHA. Well, you know, don't you, that he is in love with you.

LIZA. That is all past and gone. Whom else would you expect me to ask? What do you think: will he come back?

SASHA. I believe he will, because . . .

SCENE XIV

LIZA, SASHA. *Enter ANNA PÁVLOVNA. (SASHA suddenly stops speaking)*

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. But where is Viktor Mikhaïlovitch?
LIZA. He's gone.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Why is he gone?

LIZA. I asked him to do an errand for me.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. What errand? More secrets?

LIZA. No secrets; I merely asked him to deliver a letter to Fedya himself.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. To Fedya! To Fedya Vasilyevitch?

LIZA. Yes . . . to Fedya.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. I supposed all relations between you were ended.

LIZA. I can not be parted from him.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. What! Beginning it all over again?

LIZA. I wanted . . . I tried, but I can not. Everything you want, except leaving him.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. You mean you wish him to return?

LIZA. Yes.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. You're going to take that vile vermin back into your house?

LIZA. Mama, I beg of you not to speak so of my husband.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. He's no longer your husband.

LIZA. Yes he is; he is still my husband.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. A spendthrift, drunkard, libertine and you can not give him up!

LIZA. Why do you torment me so? It is so hard for me, and you know you like to do it!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. I torture you? Then I will go. I can not bear to hear such things. (LIZA makes no reply.) I see that you want me to go, that I am in your way. I can not live so. I don't understand you at all. This is beyond me. First you decide to separate, then suddenly you send for a man who is over ears in love with you . . .

LIZA. You're entirely wrong.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Karénin offered himself to you . . . and you get him to fetch your husband. What does this mean? Why do you do it? To excite his jealousy?

LIZA. Mama, what you are saying is horrible. Leave me!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Yes, drive your mother out of the house and take back your rake of a husband. Well, I'm not going to wait for that. So good bye and God be with you: do just as you please!

(Exit, slamming the door.)

SCENE XV

LIZA and SASHA

LIZA (*Sinks into a chair*). Isn't this the limit!

SASHA. Never mind! It will come out all right. Mama'll get over it.

SCENE XVI

LIZA, SASHA (*Enter ANNA PÁVLOVNA*)

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Dunyasha, my portmanteau!

SASHA. Mama, listen . . . (*Following her out and giving her Sister a wink*).

Curtain.

Second Tableau

SCENE I

A room at the Cypsiess'. The Chorus is singing "Kana-vela." FEDYA is discovered lying face down on a low divan with his coat off. AFREMOF astride a chair faces the chorus-leader. An OFFICER at a table whereon stand a champagne-bottle and glasses. Near him a MUSICIAN is making notes.

AFREMOF. Fedya, are you asleep?

FEDYA (*Sits up*). Don't keep talking. This is the steppe! this is the tenth century! this is not merely freedom but free will! . . . Now "It was not yesterday."

A GYPSY. Out of the question, Fyodor Vasilyevitch. Now let Masha sing her solo.

FEDYA. Very good. But afterwards give us "It was not Yesterday." (*Lies down again.*)

OFFICER. "The Hour of Fate!" Is it agreed?

AFREMOT. All right!

OFFICER (*to the MUSICIAN*). Well, have you written it down?

MUSICIAN. Impossible; it's different every time. And the scale's different somehow. Come here! (*He beckons. To a Tsuiganka who is watching him*) How is this? (*Humming the air.*)

TSUIGANKA. That's exactly right. It's wonderful!

FEDYA (*Sitting up*). He can't write it down. If he does write it down and put it into an opera, it will be all spoilt. Come now, Masha, give "The Hour." Get your guitar. (*Stands up, then sits opposite her and gazes into her eyes—MASHA sings*) Now that's fine. Aï da! Masha! Now then, "It was not Yesterday."

AFREMOF. No, wait a moment. Give my funeral song first.

OFFICER. Why funeral song?

AFREMOF. Because when I die . . . Do you get me? When I die and am laid in my coffin, the Gypsies will come . . . Do you get me? . . . I am putting it in

my will . . . for my wife . . . and they will sing: "Shol me versta"² . . . then I will jump out of my coffin. . . . Do you get me? (*To the MUSICIAN*) There's something to note down. Now then, up and at it! (*The Gypsies sing.*) Ah! How was that? Now, "Razmolodchiki moi." (*The Gypsies sing. AFREMOF executes a pas seul. The Gypsies grinning and clapping hands, keep on with their singing. AFREMOF sits down; the song ends.*)

THE GYPSIES. Aï da; Mikhail Andreyevitch, he's a genuine Gypsy!

FEDYA. Now then, "Not Yesterday!" (*The Gypsies sing.*) That's the thing! That's the thing! Splendid! Where, I should like to know, where can be found all that it says? Oh, how beautiful! And why is it, when a man reaches such ecstasy he can not maintain it?

THE MUSICIAN (*continuing to write it down*). Yes, very original.

FEDYA. No, not original, but the genuine article.

AFREMOF. Now, Chávalui, have a rest! (*Takes up a guitar and sits next KATYA.*)

THE MUSICIAN. In the main this is simple; it's only the rhythm.

FEDYA (*Waves his arm, goes over to MASHA and sits on the divan beside her*). Oh Masha, Masha, how you tear my heart out!

MASHA. Well, how about what I asked you for?

FEDYA. What? Money? (*Takes some from his trousers' pocket*). Well, then, take it.

MASHA (*Laughing, takes the money and thrusts it into her bosom*).

FEDYA (*To the Gypsies*). Now I can't make her out at all. She opens up the heavens to me and the next moment begs for perfumery! Why in the Devil's name can't you understand what you are doing?

MASHA. How do you mean, "not understand"? I understand that when I'm in love with some one, I do my best for his sake and sing better.

FEDYA. But do you love me?

MASHA. You can see I do.

FEDYA. Wonderful! (*Kisses her.*)

²"I walked a verst."

SCENE II

Exeunt Gypsies. A few couples are left: FEDYA and MASHA, AFREMOF and KATYA, the OFFICER and SASHA. The MUSICIAN is writing. A Gypsy is strumming a waltz on his guitar.

FEDYA. But you see I'm a married man. Besides the band wouldn't let you off.

MASHA. The band's the band and my heart's my heart. If I love someone, I love him. But when I hate I hate.

FEDYA. That makes me oh, how happy. Tell me, are you happy too?

MASHA. Of course I'm happy. When we have good company, why, we are jolly. *(Enter a Gypsy.)*

SCENE III

GYPSY *(To FEDYA)*. A gentleman is inquiring for you.

FEDYA. What gentleman?

GYPSY. I don't know. Well-drest, sable shuba.

FEDYA. *Barorai?*³ All right, show him in.

(Exit Gypsy.)

SCENE IV

FEDYA and MASHA. *The Same Personages*

AFREMOF. Who is looking for you here?

FEDYA. The Devil only knows who can have any dealings with me.

SCENE V

The Same. Enter KARENIN, looking about.

FEDYA. Ho, Viktor! I wasn't expecting anyone. Take off your coat. What wind blew you in here? Now, sit down. Listen they are singing "It was not Yesterday."

³ *Baro-rai*, Romany for a barin, or nobleman?

KARENIN. Je viens de chez vous. Je voudrais vous parler sans témoins.

FEDYA. What about?

KARENIN. Je viens de chez vous. Votre femme m'a chargé de cette lettre, et puis . . .

FEDYA (*takes the letter, reads it, then smiles tenderly*). Listen, Karenin, you probably know what's in this letter?

KARENIN. I do; and I want to say . . .

FEDYA. Wait, wait! I beg of you don't think that I am drunk and my words are irresponsible, that is, that I'm irresponsible. I am drunk, but in this affair I see everything perfectly clearly. Well, what were you charged to say to me?

KARENIN. I was charged to find you and say that . . . she . . . is expecting you. She begs you to forget all and to come home.

FEDYA (*Listens, silently gazing into his face*). Nevertheless, I don't understand why you . . .

KARENIN. Yelizavyeta Andreyevna sent for me and asked me . . .

FEDYA. So. . . .

KARENIN. But I beseech you not so much for your wife's sake as for mine: Come with me!

FEDYA. You are better than I. How absurd! It's not difficult to be better than I. I am a good-for-nothing; you are a fine good man. And for this very reason, I shall not change my decision. Not for this either; but simply I can not and I will not. . . . How can I go back?

KARENIN. Come with me to my house now. I will tell her that you are returning, and to-morrow . . .

FEDYA. To-morrow, what? I shall still be I and she will be—what she is. No! It's better to pull out the tooth once and for all. You see, I told her that if I broke my word again then she should have done with me. I have broken my word and it's ended.

KARENIN. For you but not for her.

FEDYA. How remarkable that you take so much pains to keep our marriage from being dissolved (KARENIN *is about to say something*. MASHA *approaches*.)

FEDYA (*interrupts him*). Now listen, listen!—Masha, sing! (*Enter the Gypsies.*)

MASHA (*in a whisper*). They might give him a send-off.

FEDYA (*Laughs heartily*). Sing his name, Viktor Mikhaïlovitch. (*The Gypsies sing.*)

KARENIN (*Listens in embarrassment: then inquires*). How much should I give?

FEDYA. Well, give twenty-five. (*KARENIN hands over the money.*) Marvellous! Now "The Flax." (*The Gypsies sing. FEDYA glances around.*) Karenin has funkcd! Well, the Devil take him!

(*The Gypsies disperse.*)

SCENE VI

The Same without KARENIN

FEDYA (*Sits down by MASHA*). You know who that was?

MASHA. I heard his name.

FEDYA. He is an admirable man. He came to fetch me home, to my wife. Fool that I am, she loves me—and here I am acting in this way!

MASHA. It certainly is not right. You ought to go back to her. You ought to be sorry for her.

FEDYA. You think so? But I think not.

MASHA. Of course if you don't love her, you ought not to. Only love is a precious thing.

FEDYA. But how do you know?

MASHA. I have good reason to know . . .

FEDYA. Well, kiss me. Now, Chavalui, give us "Flax" once more and then quit. (*The Gypsies sing.*) Oh, that is fine! If only there were no awaking . . . Just to die this way. . . .

Curtain.

ACT II

First Tableau

Two weeks have elapsed since the First Act. LIZA'S House. KARÉNIN and ANNA PÁVLOVNA are discovered sitting at a table. Enter SASHA.

SCENE I

KARENIN. Tell me, how is he?

SASHA. The doctor says he's out of danger. Only not let him catch cold.

ANNA PAVLOVNA. That's good, but Liza must be quite worn out.

SASHA. He says it's false croup in a mild form. (*Pointing to a basket*) What is that?

ANNA PAVLOVNA. Grapes Viktor brought.

KARENIN. Won't you have some?

SASHA. Thanks. She is fond of them. She has been very nervous.

KARENIN. Two nights she hasn't slept and she hasn't eaten any thing.

SASHA (*Smiling*). Neither have you.

KARENIN. I—that's a different thing.

SCENE II

The Same. Enter the DOCTOR and LIZA

DOCTOR (*In a professional tone*). Very good, very good. Change every half-hour if he is wakeful. If he is asleep, don't bother. It is not necessary to grease his throat. Keep the temperature in the room even.

LIZA. But suppose he should begin to strangle again?

DOCTOR. It's not likely. If he should, use the sprayer. And also give this powder—one at night and another dose in the morning. I will write the prescription.

ANNA PAVLOVNA. Doctor, won't you have some tea?

DOCTOR. No, I thank you; patients are expecting me. (*Takes seat at table. SASHA fetches paper and ink.*)

LIZA. You are certain he hasn't the croup?

DOCTOR (*Smiling*). Absolutely certain. (*Writes.*)

KARENIN (*To LIZA*). Now do have some tea and then you'd better go and get a little rest; you ought to see how you look.

LIZA. I feel better now. Thank you. You're a true friend. (*Presses his hand—SASHA goes to the door angrily.*) I appreciate it. You see when . . .

KARENIN. What have I done? You have nothing to thank me for.

LIZA. But who has been awake nights? Who brought this specialist?

KARENIN. Well, I'm sufficiently rewarded by Mika's being out of danger and, chiefly by your—goodness to me.

LIZA (*Again presses his hand and smilingly displays some money hidden in her hand*). This is for the doctor. Only I never know how to give it to him.

KARENIN. Well, I can't do it either.

ANNA PAVLOVNA. What can't you do?

LIZA. Give money to the doctor. He has saved what is dearer to me than my life and I give him money! There is something abhorrent about it.

ANNA PAVLOVNA. Let me have it: I will hand it to him. I know how. Very simple.

DOCTOR (*Rises and hands LIZA the prescription*). There, these powders in a tablespoonful of boiled water and well shaken and . . . (*continues his directions. KARENIN is drinking tea at the table. ANNA PAVLOVNA and SASHA come forward*).

SASHA. I can not endure their behavior together. She is simply infatuated with him.

ANNA PAVLOVNA. What is so remarkable about that?

SASHA. Disgusting!

THE LIVE CORPSE

(*The DOCTOR takes his departure, bowing to all. ANNA PAVLOVNA accompanies him.*)

SCENE III

LIZA, KARÉNIN and SASHA

LIZA (*to KARENIN*). He is so sweet now! Just as soon as he was better, he began to smile and to prattle. I am going back to him now but I don't like to leave you.

KARENIN. But do drink a little tea and eat something.

LIZA. I don't need anything now. I feel so happy after these anxieties. (*Sobs.*)

KARENIN. Now you see how weak you are!

LIZA. I am happy. Don't you want to look at him?

KARENIN. Of course I do.

LIZA. Come with me. (*Starts to walk away.*)

SCENE IV

The Same, and ANNA PAVLOVNA

ANNA PAVLOVNA (*Returning—To SASHA*). What are you scowling at? I simply handed it to him and he took it.

SASHA. Abominable! She has taken him with her to the nursery. Just as if he were her betrothed or her husband!

ANNA PAVLOVNA. What concern is that of yours? What is the use of getting excited about it? Or perhaps you have been planning to marry him yourself!

SASHA. I! I marry that old mummy? I'd marry any one but him. Such a notion has never entered my head. Only it is revolting to me that after Fedya, Liza should become so intimate with a stranger.

ANNA PAVLOVNA. How is he a stranger? He has been a friend of hers since he was a boy.

SASHA. But I see by their smiles, by their eyes, that they are in love.

ANNA PAVLOVNA. What is remarkable in that? The man has shown his sympathy with her in her child's illness; he has been thoughtful and helped her and she is grateful. And besides why should she not love Viktor and marry him?

SASHA. That would be horrible, abominable! abominable!

SCENE V

KARÉNIN and LIZA (*start to go out*)

KARENIN (*Without speaking bows his farewell*).

SASHA (*Walks away angrily*).

SCENE VI

ANNA PÁVLOVNA and LIZA

LIZA (*to her Mother*). What ails her?

ANNA PAVLOVNA. Truly I don't know. (*LIZA sighs but makes no reply.*)

SECOND TABLEAU

*Private room at AFREMOF'S. Wine in brimming glasses.
Guests*

SCENE I

AFREMOF, FEDYA, STAKHOF (*shaggy-haired*), BUTKYE-VITCH (*smooth-shaven*), KOROTKOF (*a toady*)

KOROTKOF. I tell you, he will be in last. La belle Bois is the fastest mare in Europe. What'll you bet?

THE LIVE CORPSE

STAKHOF. That'll do, sonnie! You see no one has any confidence in you and your bet won't go down.

KOROTKOF. I tell you, your Cartouche will come in last.

AFREMOF. Stop your squabbling! I'll settle the question for you. Ask Fedya: he's an authority.

FEDYA. Both horses are good. It'll depend on the jockey.

STAKHOF. Gusef is a trickster. You've got to watch out for him.

KOROTKOF (*yells*). No!

FEDYA. Now, hold on! I'll settle it for you: Who took the Derby?

KOROTKOF. He took it, but he's no good. It was a fluke. If Krakus hadn't been taken sick . . . Look here . . . (*Enter LACKEY.*)

SCENE II

The Same, and LACKEY

AFREMOF. What do you want?

LACKEY. A woman is asking for Fyodor Vasilyevitch.

AFREMOF. Who is she? A lady?

LACKEY. I don't know who she is, but she is a real lady.

AFREMOF. Fedya, a lady to see you.

FEDYA (*Alarmed*). Who is it?

AFREMOF. He doesn't know.

LACKEY. Should I show her into the drawing-room?

FEDYA. Just wait, I'll go and see.

(*Exeunt FEDYA and the LACKEY.*)

SCENE III

The Same, without FEDYA and the LACKEY

KOROTKOF. Who can be wanting him? It must be Masha.

STAKHOF. What Masha?

KOROTKOF. Masha the Gypsy girl. She's in love with him. She loves like a cat.

STAKHOF. How pretty she is! And what a singer! . . .

AFREMOF. She's a charmer! And so is Tanyusha. They sang last evening with Peter . . .

STAKHOF. Now what a lucky fellow he is!

AFREMOF. Huh! because the old women fall in love with him? Let him have 'em!

KOROTKOF. I can't endure Gypsy women—there's nothing dainty about them.

BUTKYEVITCH. You'd better not talk!

KOROTKOF. I'd rather have one little French girl than the whole bunch of them.

AFREMOF. Yes, we know you're truly esthetic. But let's go and see who it is. *(Exit.)*

SCENE IV

The Same, lacking AFREMOF

STAKHOF. If it's Masha, bring her in here and make her sing. No, the Gypsies now-a-days don't amount to much. Tanyusha used to be . . . oh, the Devil take it!

BUTKYEVITCH. Well, I think they are pretty much the same.

STAKHOF. Not by a long chalk: they sing cheap love-songs instead of Folk-songs.

BUTKYEVITCH. Well, even their love-songs are fine.

KOROTKOF. Now, what'll you bet that I will make them sing and you won't know whether it's a love-song or a folk-song?

STAKHOF. Korotkof and his everlasting bets!

SCENE V

The Same, and AFREMOF

AFREMOF *(Returning)*. Gentlemen, that's not Masha and there's no other place to receive her except here. Let's go into the billiard-room. *(Exeunt.)*

SCENE VI

(Enter FEDYA and SASHA)

SASHA (*Embarrassed*). Fedya, forgive me if I annoy you, but for God's sake, listen to me. (*Her voice trembles; FEDYA walks up and down the room. SASHA sits down and follows him with her eyes.*) Fedya, do come home.

FEDYA. Listen, Sasha, I understand you perfectly. Sasha dear, if I were in your place, I should have done the same thing—tried to get everything back on the old basis: but if you, a sweet, sensitive young girl, were in my place—strange as it may be to say so—you would certainly do what I am doing: that is, you would go away, you would put an end to being a stumbling-block in the lives of others . . .

SASHA. A stumbling-block! How so? Can Liza live without you?

FEDYA. Akh, dear Sasha, *golúbushka!* she can, she can, and be happy, far happier than with me.

SASHA. Never!

FEDYA. It seems so to you. (*He takes her hand and holds it.*) But that is not the trouble; that is, not that there is not trouble, but the real trouble is that I myself can not. . . . You know you can bend a thick paper this way and that way and you can do it a hundred times and it will not break; but bend it the hundred and first time and it breaks. So it is between me and Liza. It is too painful for me to look into her eyes. And for her it is undoubtedly the same.

SASHA. No, No!

FEDYA. You say No, but you yourself know that it is true.

SASHA. I can judge only by myself. If I were in her place and you answered her as you have answered me, it would be dreadful to me.

FEDYA. Yes, for you . . . (*Silence: both are embarrassed.*)

SASHA (*Rises*). Do you mean that your decision is unchangeable?

FEDYA. It must be . . .

SASHA. Fedya, come home!

FEDYA. Thank you, dear Sasha. You will always be a sweet dear memory to me . . . but farewell, *golú bushka!* Permit me to kiss you once. (*Kisses her on the forehead.*)

SASHA (*In great agitation*). No, I will not say Good-bye; I do not believe it, I won't believe it . . . Fedya! . . .

FEDYA. Now, just listen. Only you must not breathe a word of what I am going to say to any one. Will you promise?

SASHA. Of course.

FEDYA. Now listen, Sasha. It is true that I am her husband, the father of her child, but I am in the way. . . . Wait, wait, don't interrupt! Do you think I am jealous? Not in the least. In the first place, I have no right to be; in the second place, I have no cause to be. Viktor Karenin is an old friend of hers, of mine too. And he loves her and she loves him.

SASHA. No!

FEDYA. She loves, as any pure, honorable woman can love who does not permit herself to love anyone except her husband. But she loves him and will love him when this obstacle (*Indicating himself*) is out of the way. And I will put it out of the way and they shall be happy. (*His voice trembles.*)

SASHA. Fedya, don't speak so!

FEDYA. Now you know this is the truth and I shall rejoice in their happiness and this is the best thing I can do. . . . I am not going back and I will give them their freedom, and you tell them so. No, don't speak, don't speak . . . and farewell! (*He kisses her on the head and opens the door for her.*)

SASHA. Fedya, Fedya, I am filled with admiration of you!

FEDYA. Farewell, farewell . . . (*SASHA exit.*)

SCENE VII

FEDYA alone

FEDYA. Yes, yes . . . wonderful, splendid . . . (*Rings.*)

SCENE VIII

FEDYA and the LACKEY

FEDYA. Ask your master to come.

SCENE VIII

FEDYA alone

FEDYA. And it's the truth and it's the truth . . .

SCENE X

Enter AFREMOF

FEDYA. Let us go.

AFREMOF. Just how did you settle it?

FEDYA. Marvelously! . . . "With oaths of faith and solemn adjurations" . . . Marvelously. . . . Where's everybody?

AFREMOF. Playing billiards.

FEDYA. Very good. Let's go and join them for an hour!

Curtain

ACT III

First Tableau

ANNA DMÍTRIEVNA'S *Private Room, severely elegant, luxurious, full of souvenirs.*

SCENE I

ANNA DMÍTRIEVNA (*Writing a letter*)

SCENE II

ANNA DMÍTRIEVNA and LACKEY

LACKEY. Prince Sergyeï Dmitrievitch.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. Well, of course. (*She turns around and prinks before a mirror.*)

SCENE III

ANNA DMÍTRIEVNA and PRINCE ABREZKOF

PRINCE ABREZKOF (*entering*). J'espère que je ne force pas la consigne.¹

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. You know that vous êtes toujours le bienvenu. And especially to-day. You received my note?

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Yes and here's my answer!

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. Oh, my friend, I am beginning to be perfectly desperate. Il est ensorcelé, positivement ensorcelé.² I never before found in him such self-will, such obstinacy, such ruthlessness, such indifference to my

¹ I hope I am not intruding.

² He is bewitched, perfectly bewitched.

feelings. He has entirely changed since that woman got rid of her husband.

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Just what's the trouble now? How does the matter stand?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. He proposes to marry her whatever happens.

PRINCE ABREZKOF. But how about the husband?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. He grants her a divorce.

PRINCE ABREZKOF. So that's it!

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. And he—Viktor—exposes himself to all this filth—lawyers, proofs of guilt. . . . Tout ça est dégoûtant! And it doesn't grate on him. I don't understand him. He with his sensitiveness, his meticulousness . . .

PRINCE ABREZKOF. He is in love. Akh, when a man's dead in love, then . . .

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. Yes, but why was it that in our day love was a pure affection, a sort of friendship-love which lasted all through life? Such a love as that I understand, I respect.

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Nowadays the younger generation can not be satisfied with ideal relations. La possession de l'âme ne leur suffit plus.³ What's the use? . . . But what's to be done about him?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. No; don't speak about him! There's been some kind of hoodoo. They've entirely changed him. You know I went to call on her. He was so urgent that I should. Well I went but didn't find her in; I left cards. Elle m'a fait demander si je pourrai la recevoir.⁴ And to-day . . . she's coming (*She glances at the clock*) at two o'clock—why, it's time for her now! I promised Viktor I would receive her; but can you understand my position? I am not myself at all. And by old habit I asked you to come. I need your aid.

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Thank you.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. You realize, this visit of hers is

³ Mere possession of the soul [spiritual affinity] is not enough for them any longer.

⁴ She sent to ask if I would receive her.

to decide everything,—Viktor's fate. I must either not give my consent . . . but how can I?

PRINCE ABREZKOF. You do not know her at all?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. I have never seen her. But I am afraid of her. A good woman could not consent to desert her husband—and a fine man too. You see he is a friend of Viktor's and he used to come to the house. He was very nice. But no matter what he was! *Quels que soient les torts qu'il a eus vis-à-vis d'elle.*⁵ She must bear her cross. One thing I can not understand is how Viktor with his principles can consent to marry a divorcée. How many times and only recently too, in my presence has he argued passionately with Spitsuin, proving that divorce is not in accordance with true Christianity, and now here he is going in for it. *Si elle a pu le charmer à un tel point . . .*⁶ But dear me, I sent for you that I might listen to you and here I am doing nothing but talk myself. What do you think? Tell me. What is your opinion? What must be done? Have you talked with Viktor?

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Yes, I have talked with him and I am convinced that he loves her; he has grown into the habit of loving her so; this love of his has gained such a power over him! and you know that he is a man who is slow but obstinate when he makes up his mind. What has once entered his heart doesn't get out again. And he will never love any other woman and if he does not have her he will never be happy with anyone else.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. And what a wife Varya Kazántseva would have made him! What a fine girl she is and how fond she is of him!

PRINCE ABREZKOF (*smiling*). *C'est compter sans son hôte.*⁷ That's quite out of the question now. And I think it would be better to yield and help him to marry her.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. A divorcée! Why, he might meet his wife's former husband! I don't understand how

⁵ Whatever wrongs he may have suffered from him she mustn't desert her husband.

⁶ If she has succeeded in bewitching him so . . .

⁷ That's reckoning without your host.

you can speak calmly about it! Is this such a woman as a mother would wish to be the wife of her only son—and such a son?

PRINCE ABREZKOF. But what can you do, my dear friend? . . . Of course it would be better if he married a girl whom you know and like. . . . But since this is impossible. . . . And yet supposing he were marrying a Gypsy woman or some one worse. . . . But besides Liza Protasova⁸ is a very fine sweet woman. I know her through my niece Nellie—she's a sweet, lovely, affectionate and moral woman.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. A moral woman! One who resolves to leave her husband!

PRINCE ABREZKOF. I don't understand you—you are unkind, cruel! Her husband is one of those men of whom it is said "He is his own worst enemy." But he is even more an enemy to his wife. He is a weak, worthless drunkard. He has squandered all his property, and all hers—she has a young child. . . . How on earth can you condemn a woman who leaves such a man? And besides she hasn't left him—he left her!

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. Akh, what filth, what filth! And I have to be soiled with it!

PRINCE ABREZKOF. But your religion?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. Yes, yes, forgiveness: "As we forgive our debtors." Mais c'est plus fort que moi.⁹

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Now, tell me how can she live with such a man? Even if she did not love another man, she would be compelled to do this—compelled for the sake of the child. He himself—the husband—a sensible and good enough man, when he is in his senses, even he advises her to do this . . .

⁸ In the manuscript Liza's name is given as Rakhmanova. This may be a mistake, but possibly Abrezkof calls her by her maiden name. Russian editor's note.

⁹ But it's too much for me.

SCENE IV

ANNA DMÍTRIEVNA, PRINCE ABREZKOF. *Enter KARÉNIN. (Kisses his Mother's hand, greets PRINCE ABREZKOF.)*

KARENIN. Mama, I have come to say just one thing: Yelizavyeta Andreyevna will be here directly and I ask you, I implore you—just this one thing—if you persist in opposing my marriage . . .

ANNA DMITRIEVNA (*interrupting him*). Of course I persist in opposing it.

KARENIN (*proceeding with his sentence and frowning*). Then I ask you, I implore you—just this one thing. Do not speak of your opposition, don't mention your refusal.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. I think we shall not be very likely to talk about any such subject. I at least shall never begin it.

KARENIN. She is even less likely to do so. I only wanted you to know her.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. I think I do not comprehend: How do you reconcile your desire to marry Madame Protásova, while her husband is still alive, with your sacred conviction that divorce is contrary to Christianity?

KARENIN. Mama, this is cruel of you. Are we all so infallible that we can not change our convictions when life is so complicated? Mama, why are you so cruel to me?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. I love you, I want you to be happy.

KARENIN. (*To ABREZKOF*). Sergyeï Dmitrievitch!

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Of course you want him to be happy, but it is not easy for us, with our gray hairs, to understand young people. And it is especially hard for a mother who has become accustomed to think about her son's happiness. All women are so.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. That's just the way! You are all against me. Of course, this is within your rights, vous êtes majeur . . . ¹⁰ But you are killing me.

¹⁰ You are of age.

KARENIN. This isn't like you. This is worse than cruelty.

PRINCE ABREZKOF (*to VIKTOR*). Stop, Viktor! Your Mother's words are always worse than her actions.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. I will tell her what I think and feel and I shall speak without hurting her feelings.

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Certainly you will.

SCENE V

ANNA DMÍTRIEVNA, PRINCE ABREZKOF, KARÉNIN *and*
a LACKEY (entering)

PRINCE ABREZKOF. She has come!

KARENIN. I am going.

LACKEY. Yelizavieta Andreyevna Protasoca.

KARENIN. I am going. Mama, please! (*Exit. PRINCE ABREZKOF also rises.*)

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. Ask her in. (*To PRINCE ABREZKOF*) No, pray remain!

SCENE VI

ANNA DMITRIEVNA *and* PRINCE ABREZKOF

PRINCE ABREZKOF. I thought it might be easier for you en tête-à-tête.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. No, I am scared! (*Shows signs of nervousness.*) If I find it better to have a tête-à-tête with her I will give you a sign. Ça dépendra . . . But the idea of being alone with her makes me uncomfortable. After a little I may give you a signal like this. (*Indicates a sign.*)

PRINCE ABREZKOF. I understand. I am certain she will please you. Only be fair.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. How you are all against me!

SCENE VII

ANNA DMÍTRIEVNA, PRINCE ABREZKOF, LIZA (*entering, in hat and calling costume*)

ANNA DMITRIEVNA (*rising*). I regretted not finding you in, but it is so good of you to come to me.

LIZA. I never expected . . . I am so grateful to you for being willing to see me.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA (*Indicating PRINCE ABREZKOF*). Do you know each other?

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Certainly, I have had the honor of being presented to you.¹¹ (*Shake hands.*) My niece Nellie often speaks to me of you. (*Sits down.*)

LIZA. Yes, we used to be very good friends (*glancing timidly at ANNA DMITRIEVNA*). And we still are friends. (*To ANNA DMITRIEVNA.*) I never expected that you would want to see me.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. I used to know your husband well. He and Viktor were friends and up to the time of his transfer to Tambof he frequently called on us. I believe he married you there.

LIZA. Yes we were married there.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. But after he returned to Moscow, he did not call on me again.

LIZA. No, he went scarcely anywhere.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. And he did not bring you to see me. (*An awkward silence.*)

PRINCE ABREZKOF. The last time I met you was at the Denísofs when they gave the play. It was very pleasant. And you took a part.

LIZA. No . . . yes. . . . So it was. . . . I remember. I took part (*Silence again.*) Anna Dmitrievna, forgive me if what I am going to say is disagreeable to you, but I can not dissemble. I do not know how. I came because Viktor Mikhaïlovitch said . . . because he . . . that is because you wished to see me . . . but it is better to speak and have it done with. (*Sobs.*) It is very hard for me . . . and you are so kind.

¹¹ In English in the original.

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Well, I'd better be going.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. Yes, go!

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Au revoir. (*He takes leave of the two ladies and exit.*)

SCENE VIII

ANNA DMITRIEVNA and LIZA

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. Listen, Liza. . . . I don't know your formal name and I don't need to call you by it.

LIZA. It's Andréyevna.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. Well, Liza will suffice. I am so sorry for you, you appeal to me. But I love Viktor. I love just one being in this world. I know his soul just as I know my own. It is a proud soul. He was proud even when he was a boy of seven. Not proud of his name or of his wealth but proud of his purity, of his high moral character; and he preserves it. He is as pure as a girl.

LIZA. I know he is.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. No woman has he ever been in love with. You are the first. I will not say that I am not jealous of you. I am jealous. But we mothers—as you will know in time, for your little one is too young yet—we mothers become accustomed to the change. I myself have done so, so as to let his wife have him and not be jealous of her. But I wanted him to have a wife as pure as he is.

LIZA. I . . . am I . . .

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. Forgive me! I know you are not to blame, only unfortunate. And I know him. At the present time he is ready to bear everything and to bear it without saying a girl; but he will suffer. He will suffer in his injured pride and he will not be happy.

LIZA. I have thought of that.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. Liza, dear! You are a clever, good woman. If you love him, you will desire his happiness more than your own. Now if that is the case, you will not want to tie him down and cause him to regret it. Though he would not say a word, never a word.

LIZA. I know he wouldn't. I took all this into consideration and asked myself this very question. I have thought about it and have talked with him. But what pray can I do when he tells me that he can not live without me? I said to him: "Let us be friends! You lead your life in your own way, do not involve your pure life with my unhappy one." He will not heed me.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. No, not just now.

LIZA. If you will persuade him to give me up, I will agree. I love him for himself and not for my own happiness. Only help me! Do not hate me! We both love him, let us join in making him happy. Together act for his best good.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. Yes, yes, I have begun to love you. (*Kisses her. LIZA weeps.*) But in spite of it, in spite of it, this is a terrible situation. If only he had fallen in love with you before you were married! . . .

LIZA. He says that he did love me then but he did not want to spoil his friend's happiness.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. Akh, how trying all this is! But nevertheless we will love each other and God will help us attain our desires.

SCENE IX

ANNA DMITRIEVNA, LIZA and KARENIN

KARENIN (*entering*). Mama dear! I have heard everything. This was what I hoped: you have come to love her. And all will be well.

LIZA. How sorry I am you heard everything! I should not have said what I did.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. Still nothing has been decided. I can only say that were it not for these trying circumstances, I should be glad . . . (*Kisses her.*)

KARENIN. Only please don't change your mind!

Curtain

Second Tableau

A sordid Apartment: a bed, a writing-table, a divan.

SCENE I

FEDYA (*alone. Some one knocks. A woman's voice outside*). Why have you locked yourself in, Fyodor Vasilyevitch? Fedya, open the door . . .

SCENE II

FEDYA and MASHA

FEDYA (*Rises, opens the door*). How grateful I am to you for coming. I am blue; horribly blue!

MASHA. Why haven't you been around? You've been drinking again. Ekh, what a man! And you promised!

FEDYA. You know I have no money!

MASHA. Why did I ever fall in love with you?

FEDYA. Masha!

MASHA. What's the sense of your "Masha! Masha?" If you loved me, you'd have been divorced long ago. And they've been begging you to do so. And you confess you don't love her. Yet you stick to her! It's plain enough you don't want to.

FEDYA. Well you know why.

MASHA. That's all nonsense! They tell the truth—you're a good-for-nothing!

FEDYA. What can I say to you? That what you are charging me with hurts me, and you yourself know it.

MASHA. Hurt you nothing. . . .

FEDYA. You yourself know that my only joy in life is your love.

MASHA. My love is mine, but you have none for me.

FEDYA. Well, I won't try to persuade you. It is useless: you know perfectly well.

MASHA. Fedya, why do you torment me?

FEDYA. Who is doing the torturing. . . .

MASHA (*weeps*). You're wicked.

FEDYA (*goes to her and puts his arms around her*). Masha! What makes you? Stop! We want life and not tears. You ought not to be so bothered, My beautiful One!

MASHA. Do you love me?

FEDYA. No one but you!

MASHA. Only me? Well then, read me what you were writing.

FEDYA. It will only bore you.

MASHA. Because you wrote it, it's sure to be good.

FEDYA. Well then, listen! (*Reads.*) "One day late in the Autumn my comrade and I agreed to meet at the Murúigin Landing. This landing was on a fortified island with stone parapets. It was a gray, mild, moist, murky morning. The mist . . ."

SCENE III

FEDYA and MASHA

(*At the door appear an old Gypsy, IVÁN MAKÁROVITCH, and an old Tsvigánka, NASTÁSHA IVÁNOVNA, MASHA'S Parents.*)

NASTASHA IVANOVNA. (*Advancing toward her daughter.*) Here you are, you cursed runaway sheep! My compliments to the gentleman. (*To her daughter.*) What kind of a trick are you playing on us? Ha?

IVAN MAKAROVITCH (*to FEDYA*). You are doing wrong, barin. You are ruining the girl. Okh, it's not right! It's dirty!

NASTASHA IVANOVNA. Put on your kerchief! Out of here, instantly! You ran away, you did! What shall I tell the Band? You take up with a dead beat: what do you get out of him?

MASHA. I'm not tying myself up. I love the barin and that's all there is to it. I'm not quitting the Band either; I'm going to sing and as for . . .

IVAN MAKAROVITCH. If you say another word, I'll tear your hair out. Slut! Who set you this example? Not your father or your mother or your aunt? 'Twas vile of you, barin! We liked you! how many times we have sung for you for nothing; we felt sorry for you. And now see what you've done!

NASTASHA IVANOVNA. You thought nothing of ruining my little girl—my own, my only, my darling, my jewel, my precious one—you have dragged her through the mire—that's what you've done! What is God to you?

FEDYA. Oh, Nastasya Ivanovna, you are unfair to me. I have treated your daughter just as if she were my sister. I have safeguarded her honor. Don't think such things of me! I love her . . . what's to be done?

IVAN MAKAROVITCH. You didn't love her when you had money. At that time you should have put in ten-thousand with the Band and you might have had her honorably. But now you are strapped and you are stealing her. Shame on you, barin! Shame on you!

MASHA. He hasn't stolen me away; I came to him of my own accord. And if you take me off I'll come again. I love him in spite of everything. My love for him is stronger than all your locks. . . . I won't!

NASTASHA IVANOVNA. Now, Máshenka, my heart's darling, don't get excited! You've done wrong; come, let us go!

IVAN MAKAROVITCH. Now put an end to your discussing. Marsch! (*He seizes Masha by the hand.*) Good bye, barin! Forgive us. (*All three exeunt.*)

SCENE IV

FEDYA. *Enter PRINCE ABREZKOF*

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Excuse me. I was involuntarily the witness of a disagreeable scene. . . .

FEDYA. With whom have I the honor? . . . (*Recognizes him.*) Ah, Prince Sergyeï Dmitrievitch. (*Greets him.*)

PRINCE ABREZKOF. The involuntary witness of a dis-

agreeable scene, I should have preferred not to hear it. But having heard, I consider it my duty to tell you that I did. I was directed here and compelled to wait at the door until after those people left. Moreover my knocking was not heard because of their very loud voices.

FEDYA. Yes, yes, I beg you humbly . . . I thank you for telling me this: it gives me the right to explain that scene to you. What you think about me is a matter of indifference. But I will tell you that the recriminations you heard regarding that girl—a Gypsy girl, a singer—are unjust. That young girl is as morally pure as a dove. And my relations with her have been only that of a friend. If may be a tinge of poetry has mingled with them, still it has not impugned that girl's purity, her honor. That is all I wanted to say to you. And now what is it you want of me? In what way can I serve you?

PRINCE ABREZKOF. In the first place I . . .

FEDYA. Excuse me, Prince. I have reached such a position in society that my former slight acquaintance with you does not entitle me to a call from you, unless you have some business with me—what is it?

PRINCE ABREZKOF. I will not deny it—you have guessed right. Business brings me here. But nevertheless I beg leave to assure you that the change in your position could never affect my attitude toward you.

FEDYA. I am quite certain of that.

PRINCE ABREZKOF. This is my errand: the son of my old friend Anna Dmitrievna Karenina—and she herself also—asked me to learn from you personally concerning your relations—you will permit me to go on speaking—concerning your relations to your wife, Yelizavyeta Andreyevna Protasova.

FEDYA. My relations with my wife—I should say, with my former wife, are absolutely broken off.

PRINCE ABREZKOF. So I understood and for that reason only I undertook this delicate mission.

FEDYA. They were broken off, I hasten to aver, not through her fault but through mine, or rather because of my endless wrong doing. *She* always has been and still is perfectly irreproachable.

PRINCE ABREZKOF. That being so, Viktor Karenin—and especially his mother—asked me to learn from you what you intend to do.

FEDYA (*Growing angry.*) What I intend to do? Nothing. I leave her absolutely free. More than that, I shall never disturb her tranquillity. I know she loves Viktor Karenin. Let her! I know him as a very tiresome but a very good, honorable man, and I think she will be very happy with him (as the usual saying goes). And . . . que le bon Dieu les bénisse. That's all there is to it. . . .

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Yes but he should . . .

FEDYA (*Interrupts him.*) And don't think that I ever had the slightest feeling of jealousy. What I just said of Viktor that he is tiresome, I will take back. He is a fine man, honorable and moral, just about the antithesis of myself. And he has loved her since they were children. May be she loved him when she married me. Such things happen. The truest love may be unknown even to oneself. I really think she always loved him. But like a pure woman she did not avow it even to herself. But that fact . . . well, it lay like a shadow on our married life. . . . But there I am making a confession to you . . .

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Please go on. Believe me, when I tell you that in thus approaching you, more important to me than any thing else is my desire to have a complete comprehension of these relations. I understand you. I realize how this shadow, as you beautifully say, might be . . .

FEDYA. Yes, it was and possibly this was why I was not happy in the family life which she brought me and so I sought for satisfaction elsewhere and let myself be led astray. However, I seem to be justifying myself. I have no wish and certainly no intention to justify myself: it would be impossible. I have been a bad husband—I say "have been" frankly, because I now acknowledge to myself I am no longer her husband. And I consider her perfectly free. So then, this is my answer to your mission.

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Yes, but you know Viktor's family

and Viktor himself. His relations to Yelizavyeta Andreyevitch have been and still are perfectly honorable and impersonal. He merely came to her assistance when she was in trouble.

FEDYA. Yes, I by my licentiousness helped to bring them together. What could you expect? . . . It was the fatality of things.

PRINCE ABREZKOF. You know the strict orthodox convictions of Viktor and his family. I do not share them. I look at things more broadly. But I respect them and understand them. I understand that for him and particularly for his mother a union with a woman without an ecclesiastical marriage is unthinkable.

FEDYA. Yes, I know his stup . . . his inflexibility, his conservatism in this respect. But what do they require? A divorce? I told them long ago that I was ready to grant it, but the proviso that I should acknowledge myself guilty and lie in doing so, is hard for me.

PRINCE ABREZKOF. I understand you perfectly and agree with you. But what is to be the outcome? . . . I think it can be managed . . . However, you are right. It is horrid and I understand you.

FEDYA (*Pressing his hand*). Thank you, dear Prince. I always knew you as a fine honorable man. Now tell me, how I can manage? What can I do? Put yourself into my place. I am not trying to make myself out better than I am. But there are things which I can not bring myself to do. I can not coolly lie.

PRINCE ABREZKOF. I can not quite make you out. You a clever, talented man, with such a delicate sense of right conduct, how can you be so seduced into doing this sort of thing? How can you forget the demands of your own nature? How did you sink so low? Why did you ruin your own life?

FEDYA (*Restraining tears of emotion*). Here for the past ten years I have been living this dissolute life, and this is the first time that a man like you has shown me any sympathy. Fellow-debauchees, dissipated men, common women have been sorry for me, but as for any man of sobriety and character like yourself . . . Thank you! How did I fall into my present condition? In the first

place—wine. You must know I don't care for wine and whatever I do I always am conscious that it is wrong and I feel ashamed. Here I am talking with you and I am ashamed. Even to be a director, to have a position in a bank is so shameful, so shameful. . . . And just as soon as you take a drink, that feeling of shame passes away. And then music,—not the opera or Beethoven, but the Gypsies. . . . What a life that is! How new energy awakens in you. And besides those soft black eyes, those smiles! And the more fascinating all this is, the deeper the sense of shame afterwards.

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Well, how about work?

FEDYA. I have tried it. No good at all. I am disgusted with everything. But why talk about myself? I thank you.

PRINCE ABREZKOF. So what am I to say?

FEDYA. Say that I will do what they wish. They wish to be married, don't they—to have no one interfere with their marriage?

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Of course.

FEDYA. I will do it, tell them I will certainly do it.

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Just when?

FEDYA. Let me think! Well suppose we say in a fortnight.

PRINCE ABREZKOF (*Rising*). And I may tell them so?

FEDYA. You may. Good-bye Prince; once again I thank you. (*Exit PRINCE ABREZKOF.*)

SCENE V

FEDYA *alone*

FEDYA (*Sits a long time in silence, then smiles*). Good, very good! This is the way, this is the way, this is the way! Wonderful!

Curtain

ACT FOUR

First Tableau

In a Restaurant. A private room. A Waiter shows in
FEDYA and IVÁN PETROVITCH ALEKSANDROF.

SCENE I

FEDYA, IVÁN PETROVITCH *and the* WAITER

WAITER. This way please. No one will disturb you here and I will bring you writing-paper directly.

IVAN PETROVITCH. Protasof! I am coming with you.

FEDYA (*Gravely*). Come in please, but I am busy. . . . If you wish, come in!

IVAN PETROVITCH. You are going to answer their demands? I will tell you how. I wouldn't beat about the bush so. I always speak right to the point and act with decision.

FEDYA (*to the* WAITER). A bottle of champagne!
(*Exit* WAITER.)

SCENE II

FEDYA *and* IVÁN PETROVITCH

FEDYA (*Takes out a pistol and lays it down*). Wait a while!

IVAN PETROVITCH. What! You intend to blow your brains out? You might, you might. I understand you. They want to humiliate you but you will show them what you are. You down yourself with a pistol and them with your magnanimity. I understand you. I understand it all, because I am a genius. . . .

FEDYA Yes, I see. Only . . . (*Enter* WAITER *with paper and inkstand*).

SCENE III

FEDYA, IVÁN PETROVITCH and WAITER

FEDYA (*Throws a napkin over the pistol*). Uncork the bottle. Come, let's drink. (*They drink—FEDYA writes*). Wait a moment.

IVAN PETROVITCH. To your . . . great journey. You see I am above such things. I am not going to keep you from it. Both life and death are immaterial to a genius. I live in death and I die in life. You commit suicide so as to make two persons pity you. But I . . . I kill myself so that the whole world may realize what it has lost. I shall not even hesitate or deliberate. Here I have it (*He seizes the pistol*) . . . One . . . and it's done! (*He lays down the pistol*.) But my time hasn't come as yet. And I shall not need to write anything; the act must tell its own story. . . . Oh you . . .

FEDYA (*Writes*). Just wait a little.

IVAN PETROVITCH. . . . miserable creatures! Hustling, bustling! Never understanding, never understanding anything. I don't mean you in particular. I am merely expressing my own ideas. And what does mankind need? Very little: just to appreciate its geniuses. But it is forever putting them to death, persecuting them, torturing them. . . . No I am not going to be your plaything. I will lead you to pure waters. N-o-o-o. You hypocrites!

FEDYA (*Having finished his writing, takes a drink and reads it over*). Please go!

IVAN PETROVITCH. Go? Well, good-bye. I am not going to keep you from it. I shall do the same thing. But not yet awhile. I only want to tell you . . .

FEDYA. All right. You can tell me, but bye and bye. First here's something, my good friend: please give this to the restaurant-keeper (*Hands him some money*) and ask if there's a letter and a parcel for me. Please!

IVAN PETROVITCH. Very good. So you will wait for me? I have something else of importance to tell you—something that you won't otherwise hear either in this

world or in the world to come, at least not until I get there myself. . . . Shall I give him all this?

FEDYA. Whatever is necessary.

(Exit IVAN PETROVITCH.)

SCENE IV

FEDYA *alone*

FEDYA (*Heaves a sigh of relief, locks the door on IVAN PETROVITCH, takes the pistol, cocks it, presses it against his temple, shudders and lays it down gingerly: He groans*). No, I can not, can not, I can not! (*Some one knocks at the door.*) Who is there? (MASHA'S voice on the other side of the door: *It's I.*)

FEDYA. I? Akh, Masha! . . . (*Opens the door.*)

SCENE V

FEDYA and MASHA

MASHA. I went to your room, to Popóf's, to Afremof's and then I suspected you might be here. (*Sees the pistol.*) That's a great note! Well you are a fool! Truly a fool! So you are actually on the point of it.

FEDYA. No, I can't do it.

MASHA. And I don't count? Reprobate! Had you no pity on me? Akh, Fedya Vasilyevitch, it's a crime, a crime! In return for my love. . . .

FEDYA. I wanted to free them; I gave them my promise. I can not play them false.

MASHA. But how about me?

FEDYA. What about you? I should have left you free. Is it best for you to be tormented by me?

MASHA. Of course it's best. I can not live without you.

FEDYA. What kind of a life is it with me? You would weep for a little while and then your life would begin again.

MASHA. I shouldn't weep at all. The Devil take you! If you don't have pity on me. (*Bursts into tears.*)

FEDYA. Masha, dear girl! I really wanted to do what was best.

MASHA. Best for yourself!

FEDYA (*Smiling*). How could it be best for myself, if I should commit suicide?

MASHA. Of course, 'twould be best. But what's the trouble, tell me?

FEDYA. What do you mean, "trouble"? Many things trouble me.

MASHA. Well, what, what things?

FEDYA. In the first place, I must keep my promise. That is the first thing and that is enough. I can not lie and do all those vile things required for securing a divorce.

MASHA. Let us grant it is vile. I myself . . .

FEDYA. Then I am really bound to let them be free—both my wife and him. Why not? They are good people. Why make them wretched? That's two.

MASHA. Well, there's mighty little good in her if she left you.

FEDYA. She didn't—I left her.

MASHA. Well, all right, all right! It was all your fault. She is an angel. What else is there?

FEDYA. What else? You yourself—a dear, sweet young girl—I love you and if I go on living I shall be your ruin.

MASHA. That's not your lookout at all. I know I am quite able to decide what'll be my ruin.

FEDYA (*Sighs*). But the main thing, the main thing. . . . What good is my life? Don't I see that I am an abandoned wretch, a miserable good-for-nothing? I'm a burden to everyone and to myself, as your father says. I am a double-dyed villain.

MASHA. That's rot! I've got my clutches on you; I won't let go of you. I'll stick and that's all there is to it. Supposing you do lead a dissipated life, suppose you do drink and go on sprees. . . . But you're a real man. Cut it out! That's all!

FEDYA. Easily said!

MASHA. You can do it!

FEDYA. Indeed when I look at you, it seems to me I can do anything.

MASHA. And you will. You will do everything. (*Notices the letter.*) What is this? You've been writing them? What did you write?

FEDYA. What did I write? (*Picks up the letter and starts to tear it up.*) It's no longer necessary.

MASHA (*Snatches the letter from him*). Did you write that you had killed yourself? Did you? Did you mention the pistol? You wrote that you had killed yourself?

FEDYA. Yes, that that would be the end of me.

MASHA. Let me have it, let me have it, let me have it! Did you ever read *Tchto Dyelat?*¹

FEDYA. Yes, I think so.

MASHA. It's a tiresome novel, but there is one very, very good thing in it. The hero—what was he called? Rakhmánof . . . he all of a sudden made people think he had drowned himself. Now you do the same thing. Can you swim?

FEDYA. No.

MASHA. Well then, give me your coat, everything, your pocket-book too.

FEDYA. But what for?

MASHA. Wait, wait, wait! Let's go to your rooms. You will change your clothes there.

FEDYA. Yes, but that's a fraud.

MASHA. It's all right! You go out to bathe, your clothes are found on the river-bank. In the pocket will be your pocket-book and this letter.

FEDYA. Well and then what?

MASHA. Then what? Then we'll go and have a beautiful life.

¹ A famous novel by Nikolai Gavrilovich Chernushkevsky. It was translated by Nathan Haskell Dole and S. S. Skidelsky and published in 1886 under the title "A Vital Question, or What is to be Done." Not Rakhmanof whom Tolstoi confuses with Rakhmetof (a character easily recognized as Karakózof, who in 1866 attempted to assassinate Alexander I), but Lopukhóf pretended to drown himself in the Nieva River.

SCENE VI

FEDYA, MASHA (*Enter* IVAN PETROVITCH)

IVAN PETROVITCH. Ah ha! So that's the trick! But the pistol? I will take it.

MASHA. Take it, take it, but we're off.

*Second Tableau**The Drawing-room at the PROTASOFS'*

SCENE I

KARENIN and LIZA

KARENIN. He promised so solemnly that I am convinced he will keep his word.

LIZA. It fills me with shame but I must confess that what I hear about that Tsuiganka quite freed me. Don't imagine that I was jealous. It was not jealousy, but you know it was freedom. Now how can I say it to you?²

KARENIN. That formality again!

LIZA (*Smiling*). To thee then! But don't interrupt me. Don't prevent me from saying what I feel. The main thing—that tormented me—was that I loved two men. And that signifies that I am an immoral woman.

KARENIN. You an immoral woman!

LIZA. But as soon as I knew that he had another woman, I mean, that he did not need me, I was freed from him and I felt that I could say truthfully that I loved you—thee. Now it is all clear in my soul and the only thing that troubles me is my position. This divorce! It is all so painful! This uncertainty.

² *Vam*, to you, the formal personal pronoun, instead of *tebye*, to thee, used in intimate speech.

KARENIN. It will be decided shortly, very shortly. Besides having his promise, I sent my secretary to wait on him with the papers and not to come away until he had signed them. If I did not know him as well as I do, I should think he was delaying on purpose.

LIZA. He? No, it all comes from his weakness and his honesty. He doesn't like to tell what isn't true. Only it was not wise to send him money.

KARENIN. It had to be done. There might have been more delays.

LIZA. No, the money-part is not good.

KARENIN. Well, by now may be he is less pointilleux.³

LIZA. What egotists we are becoming!

KARENIN. Yes, I plead guilty. You yourself are to blame! After this suspense, this hopelessness . . . and now we are so happy! And happiness tends to egotism! You are to blame.

LIZA. You think you only are happy! I am also. I feel that my cup is overflowing; I am intoxicated with happiness. Everything! Mika is getting well and your mother loves me—and you—and what is best, I too love.

KARENIN. Yes? Without regret? without recall?

LIZA. Since that day everything within me has been changed.

KARENIN. And no danger of any afterthought?

LIZA. Never! My only trust is that you have definitely broken with the past as I have.

SCENE II

KARENIN, LIZA *and the Nurse with the Child*

(*Enter NURSE with the young child. The boy runs to his mother. She takes him up on her lap*)

KARENIN. What unlucky people we are!

LIZA. Tell me, what is it? (*Kisses the child.*)

KARENIN. When you married, and I, on returning from abroad, heard about it and realized that I had lost

³ Touchy . . .

you, I was unhappy. Then I was glad to find that you remembered me. It made me feel pleased. Afterwards, when friendly relations were established between us and I realized that you liked me, that there was in our friendship a tiny spark of something more than friendship, I began to be almost happy. I was tormented only by the fear of being dishonorable in regard to Fedya. Yet on the other hand, I always had such a firm conviction that it was impossible for me to enter into any other relations than of a purely friendly nature with my friend's wife—and I knew you felt the same—I became quite happy. Afterwards when Fedya began to annoy you and I felt that I was of assistance to you, and that you were afraid of my friendship, I became perfectly happy and there sprang up within me a sort of indefinite hope. Then . . . when he became impossible and you decided to separate from him and, for the first time I told you all and you did not say No, but went out of the room with tears in your eyes, I was filled with happiness and if I had been asked what more I wished, I should have answered, Nothing more. But then dawned the possibility of our union; maman has grown fond of you, this possibility is becoming reality; you have confessed that you did love and do love me and now you have just told me that he no longer exists for you, that I am the only one you love—what more, then, should I desire? But, in spite of that, at this very instant I am tortured by the past; I could wish that there had never been any such past, that nothing existed to remind us of him.

LIZA (*Reproachfully*). Viktor!

KARENIN. Liza, do forgive me! In speaking so, I speak because I wish that not a thought of mine regarding you should be hidden from you. I said what I said with the single purpose of showing you how wicked I am and how well I know that I could not go further, that I must fight with my evil tendencies and overcome them. And I have won the victory. I love him.

LIZA. That is right. I have done all I could. Not I but my heart has brought about what you have wished for: from it everything has disappeared but you.

KARENIN. Everything?

LIZA. Everything, everything. Otherwise I could not have said what I have just told you.

SCENE III

KARENIN, LIZA, *the NURSE with the Child and a LACKEY*

LACKEY. Mr. Voznesensky.

KARENIN. He has come with the answer from Fedya.

LIZA (*to KARENIN*). Bring him in.

KARENIN (*Rises and goes to the door*). Well, here's the answer.

LIZA (*Gives the child to the NURSE. Exit NURSE*). Can it be that all is decided, Viktor? (*Kisses him*).

SCENE IV

KARENIN, LIZA and VOZNESENSKY (*entering*)

KARENIN. Well, how about it?

VOZNESENSKY. He has disappeared.

KARENIN. Disappeared! Didn't he sign the document?

VOZNESENSKY. The document has not been signed but a letter was left for you and Yelizavyeta Andreyevna. (*Takes a letter from his pocket*) I went to his apartment. I was informed that he was at a certain restaurant. I went there. I found him. Fyodor Vasilyevitch said I was to return in an hour and should have the answer. I went back and this . . .

KARENIN. Can it be more procrastination, more subterfuges? No, that would be up and down wicked! How he has fallen!

LIZA. Yes but read it, what does he say? (*KARENIN tears open the letter.*)

VOZNESENSKY. Do you need me further?

KARENIN. No, good-bye, I thank you . . . (*Stands in amazement as he reads.*) (*Exit VOZNESENSKY.*)

SCENE V

KARENIN *and* LIZA

LIZA. What is it, what is it?

KARENIN. This is horrible!

LIZA (*Tries to snatch the letter from him*). Read it!

KARENIN (*Reads*). "Liza and Viktor! I address you both. I am not going to lie by calling you 'Dear' or 'My dear.' I confess to a feeling of bitterness and reprobation—self-reprobation, painful enough—when I think of you, of your love for each other, of your happiness. I know all. I know that though I was the husband, a chain of circumstances, put me between you. C'est moi, qui suis l'intrus.⁴ Nevertheless I can not restrain my feeling of bitterness and coldness toward you. Theoretically I love you both, especially Liza, Lizanka, but in reality, I am more than cold toward you. I know that I am in the wrong but I cannot change my attitude . . .

LIZA. What is that he . . .

KARENIN (*Continuing to read*). "This two-fold feeling is what compels me to fulfil your wishes otherwise than as you expected. It goes against the grain for me to lie, to play the disgusting farce by giving bribes to the Consistory: all this filth is insupportable, unendurable to me. However vile I am, I am vile in a different way and I can not soil myself with this filth, I simply *can not*. There is another way out and I have chosen it—the very simplest of all: you must marry in order to be happy; I am in your way, consequently I must destroy myself . . .

LIZA (*Seizes KARENIN's hand*). Viktor!

KARENIN (*Reads on*). "I must destroy myself. And I am going to destroy myself. When you read this letter I shall be no more.

"Postscript: I am very sorry that you sent me money for procuring the divorce. That was disagreeable and not like you. But what difference does it make?

⁴I am the intruder.

I have made so many mistakes it is your privilege to make a mistake also. The money will be returned. My solution is shorter, cheaper and surer. I will make one request: do not be angry with me; remember me affectionately. One thing more: There is the watch-maker Yevgenyef—can't you help him and straighten out his affairs? He is weak but a good fellow. Farewell!

FEDYA."

LIZA. He has killed himself. Yes . . .

KARENIN. (*Rings and rushes into the anteroom*). Call Mr. Voznesensky back!

LIZA. I knew it, I knew it! Dear Fedya!

KARENIN. Liza!

LIZA. It was not true, that I didn't love him! I do love him! He is the only one I love. I love him and I am his murderer! Leave me!

(*Enter VOZNESENSKY.*)

SCENE VI

KARENIN, LIZA and VOZNESENSKY

KARENIN. Where is Fyodor Vasilyevitch? What did they tell you?

VOZNESENSKY. They said he went out this morning, left this letter and had not been seen since.

KARENIN. We must find out about this. Liza, I will leave you for a while.

LIZA. Forgive me, but I too can not lie. Leave me now. Go and find out . . .

Curtain

ACT FIVE

First Tableau

A dirty room in a public house. A table; persons drinking tea and vodka. In the foreground a small table at which sits FEDYA ragged and shabby and with him PYETUSHKOF, a deferential, smooth-spoken man, with long hair and clerical aspect. Both have been drinking a little too much.

SCENE I

FEDYA and PYETUSHKOF

PYETUSHKOF. I understand, understand perfectly. Now that's genuine love. Well, what about it?

FEDYA. Yes, you see, if these sentiments were to impel a girl of our class to sacrifice everything for the man she loves . . . but here is a Tsuiganka, wholly trained to greed and yet with this pure self-sacrificing love! She gives everything and asks nothing for herself. What a contrast!

PYETUSHKOF. Yes, this is what we painters call *valeur*. You can get a perfectly brilliant red only when you put it next to green. But this is a different matter. I understand, I understand . . .

FEDYA. Yes, and it seems to me that the one good action—the one thing which left my conscience clear—is that I did not take advantage of her love. Do you know why?

PYETUSHKOF. Pity?

FEDYA. Oh no! I did not feel sorry for her. When I was with her I always was in raptures and when she was singing—akh! how she sang! Perhaps even now she is singing—and I always looked up to her! I did

not ruin her, because I loved her. I loved her truly. And now it is a sweet, sweet memory. (*Drinks.*)

PYETUSHKOF. There, I understand, I understand. Ideal!

FEDYA. I will tell you this: I have had infatuations and one time I fell desperately in love—she was such a beauty! My passion for her was nasty, like a dog's—and she gave me a rendez-vous. And I cut it. It seemed to me a rotten way to treat her husband. And from that time, strangely enough, when I recall it to mind though I like to feel virtuous and brag of having acted honorably . . . yet . . . I feel conscious-stricken as if I had sinned. But in the case of Masha it is just the opposite. I always feel glad I did nothing to profane this sacred feeling of mine . . . I may fall still lower, I may go into the depths . . . may lose everything, be check-mated in everything, I may be a mangy dog, but this diamond, no, not diamond, this sun-burst ay! it is in me, with me!

PYETUSHKOF. I understand, I understand. Where is she now?

FEDYA. I do not know. And I should not care to know. All that was in another life. And I do not wish to confuse it with this.

(At the table behind them the shriek of a woman is heard. The dive-keeper and a Policeman hasten to her and lead her away. FEDYA and PYETUSHKOF watch and listen without speaking.)

PYETUSHKOF (*After quiet has been restored*). Yes, your life has been remarkable.

FEDYA. No, most uneventful. You see, we in our class—that in which I was born—have three courses to choose from—only three: the service with its chances for money-making, its ever-spreading corruption which you live in . . . This was repulsive to me—may be I hadn't the ability, but it was simply repulsive. The second is to fight this corruption: this requires heroism but I wasn't a hero. Or, third—to forget it all—in wine,

women and song.¹—and that was the very thing I did. And this is what I have come to! (*Drinks.*)

PYETUSHKOF. Well, how about your home life? I should have been happy if I had been happily married. My wife ruined me.

FEDYA. Home life? Yes. My wife was an ideal woman. She is still alive. But how can I explain it to you? You know what raisins do to kvas: well, she didn't put the raisins in! There was no sport in our life and I needed to forget myself, but without sport one can't forget oneself. And then I began to behave disreputably. You know how it is: we love people for the good we have done, and we dislike them for the wrong we have inflicted on them. And I committed wrongs against her. Yet she seemed to love me.

PYETUSHKA. Why do you say, "Seemed?"

FEDYA. I say so because she never had that way of getting to my heart as Masha did. That isn't quite the right way to put it either. When she was pregnant, or when she was nursing the baby and I yielded to temptation and came home drunk and of course for that very reason, my love for her grew less and less. Yes, yes (*Grows enthusiastic.*) Here is what has just come into my mind: I love Masha because I have behaved well and not ill toward her. Hence I love her. But I was a torment to the other and so . . . not that I don't love her . . . No, I don't either, I simply do not love her. I used to be jealous,—yes, but that feeling has all gone.

SCENE II

FEDYA, PYETUSHKOF, and ARTEMYEF

(*Enter ARTEMYEF, with dyed whiskers, wearing a patched old suit and a military cockade.*)

ARTEMYEF. I greet you.² (*Bows to FEDYA.*) So you and the artist, the painter, are acquainted?

FEDYA (*frigidly*). Yes, we are acquainted.

¹ *Pit', gulyat', pyet'*. To drink, to dissipate, to sing.

² *Priyatnago appetita*, literally "I wish you a pleasant appetite, *bon appetit*."

ARTEMYEF (*To PYETUSHKOF*). Tell me, have you finished the portrait?

PYETUSHKOF. No, it was a fluke.

ARTEMYEF (*Sits down*). I am not intruding? (*FEDYA and PYETUSHKOF say nothing.*)

PYETUSHKOF. Fyodor Vasilyevitch was telling about his life.

ARTEMYEF. Secrets? Then I won't intrude. Go ahead. I certainly don't need you. Swine! (*He proceeds to the next table and orders beer. He listens to FEDYA's conversation with PYETUSHKOF, leaning toward them.*)

FEDYA. I don't like that man.

PYETUSHKA. He was offended.

FEDYA. Well, never mind! I can't endure him. With such a creature around it is impossible for me to talk. While, with you it is easy, agreeable. What was I saying?

PYETUSHKOF. You were saying that you were jealous. Now how did you come to separate from your wife?

FEDYA. Oh! (*Becomes lost in thought.*) It is a remarkable story. My wife is married . . .

PYETUSHKOF. How was that? Divorce?

FEDYA. No! (*Smiles.*) She became a widow by my act.

PYETUSHKOF. How could that be?

FEDYA. Exactly so: a widow. You see I am no longer alive!

PYETUSHKOF. Why aren't you?

FEDYA. No, I am a corpse! I am. (*ARTEMYEF leans closer and listens.*) Do you see—I can tell you. This happened a long time ago and you don't even know my real name. This is the way it was: when I had tormented my wife to the limit, had squandered everything I could and had become unendurable to her, her protector appeared. Don't imagine there was anything scandalous, or improper—not at all: He was a friend of mine, a good man, a very good man, just the opposite to me in every respect. And since in me there was far more of evil than of good, why he was and still is a good man, a very good man—honorable, solid, temperate, absolutely virtuous. He had known my wife since they were chil-

dren, had loved her, but when she married me he had submitted to his fate. But when I began to be odious, began to abuse her, he kept coming to the house more and more frequently. This accorded with my own desire. And they fell in love. By this time I had entirely gone to the bad and I abandoned my wife. And besides there was Masha. I myself proposed to them to get married. They objected to it. But I was becoming more and more impossible and finally they . . .

PYETUSHKA. As always . . .

FEDYA. No! I believe and indeed I know that they were chaste. He, being a religious man, looked upon a marriage without a Priest's blessing as a sin. Well, they began to clamor for a divorce—that I should consent to it. This obliged me to furnish the proof of guilt. It obliged me to do all the lying. . . . And that was impossible for me. Will you believe me, it was easier for me to make way with myself than to lie? Just at that moment a worthy person asks: "What's the use?" And a complete plan was formulated. I sent a farewell letter and the following day my clothes, my pocket-book and papers were discovered on the river-bank. I can't swim!

PYETUSHKOF. Yes, but how about the body? They didn't find that?

FEDYA. They did! Just fancy!—a week later a body was found. My wife was summoned to see it. A decomposed body! She gave one glance at it.—"He?"—"He!"—So it was decided. I was buried and they were married and live happily ever after! And I—I am he! I am alive and I drink! Last evening I walked by their house. The windows were lighted; someone's shadow moved across the curtain. And sometimes I feel rotten and then again—nitchevo! I feel rotten when I have no money . . . (*Takes a drink.*)

ARTEMYEF (*Comes back to them*). Now forgive me, I have been listening to your story. Your story is very excellent and what is most important, profitable. You say you feel rotten when you have no money. But why do you? In your situation you ought always to have money. You see you are a corpse. Excellent . . .

FEDYA. If you please! I was not telling my story to you and I do not wish your advice.

ARTEMYEF. But I wish to give you some. You are a corpse but if you come to life, why then, they—your wife and the gentleman who are living happily—are bigamists and in the most fortunate event they will experience the delights of exile. Why on earth then be without money?

FEDYA. I request you to leave me.

ARTEMYEF. Simply write a letter. If you like, I will write it; only give me their address and you will be grateful to me.

FEDYA. Get you gone! I tell you. I have not said a thing to you!

ARTEMYEF. Yes you have. This man here is a witness. The waiter heard you say that you are a corpse.

WAITER. We know nothing.

FEDYA. Rascal!

ARTEMYEF. I—a rascal? Hey, Officer! Draw up an indictment.

(FEDYA rises and starts to go. ARTEMYEF prevents him.
A Policeman comes to them.)

Curtain

Second Tableau

At a country-house on a terrace covered with ivy
SCENE I

ANNA DMITRIEVNA KARENINA, LIZA big with child,
NURSE with LIZA'S little boy

LIZA. By now he is leaving the station.

THE BOY. Who is?

LIZA. Papa.

THE BOY. Papa's leaving the station.

LIZA. C'est étonnant comme il l'aime, tout-à-fait comme son père!³

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. Tant mieux! Se souvient-il de son père véritable?⁴

LIZA (*Sighs*). I don't speak about it to him. I say to myself, Why confuse him? But then again I think I ought to tell him. What do you think about it, maman?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. I think, Liza, this is a question of feeling and if you give in to your feeling, your heart will guide you in what you ought to say and when to say it. How marvelously death reconciles! I confess there was a time when he—you see I knew Fedya as a boy—seemed to me detestable, but now I remember him only as a dear young fellow, Viktor's friend and as that impulsive man who immolated himself—even though it was contrary to law and religion—for those he loved. On aura beau dire, l'action est belle . . .⁵ I hope Viktor won't have forgotten to bring the wool, I shall be quite out of it presently. (*Knits.*)

LIZA. Here he is this minute! (*The sound of carriage-wheels and harness-bells is heard. LIZA rises and crosses to the terrace-railing.*) He has someone with him! A lady in a bonnet! Mama! I haven't seen her for a hundred years! (*Goes to the entrance.*)

SCENE II

LIZA, ANNA DMÍTRIEVNA KARÉNINA, NURSE *with the* BOY. *Enter KARÉNIN and ANNA PÁVLOVNA*

ANNA PAVLOVNA (*Kisses LIZA and ANNA DMITRIEVNA*). Viktor met me and brought me along.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. He did just right.

ANNA PAVLOVNA. Yes, it was a piece of good fortune. I had been thinking: When should I see you again? and kept putting it off. Well, here I have come—if you don't send me back—to stay till the evening train.

³ It is marvelous how he loves him—just as if t'were his father.

⁴ So much the better. Does he remember his real father?

⁵ Whatever one may say, it was a fine action.

KARENIN (*Kisses his wife, his mother and THE BOY*). Oh how happy I feel. Congratulate me: Two days at home. To-morrow they'll do all the work without me.

LIZA. Splendid! Two days! That hasn't happened in a long time. Shall we drive over to the hermitage? Yes?

ANNA PAVLOVNA. What a resemblance! What a nice boy! Provided only he hasn't inherited all his father's qualities—only his heart . . .

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. But not his weakness.

LIZA. All of them, all of them! Viktor agrees with me that if only he had been guided from the time he was a little boy . . .

ANNA PAVLOVNA. Well, I can't say anything about that. Only I can't think of him without tears.

LIZA. It's the same with us. How he has grown in our recollection of him!

ANNA PAVLOVNA. Yes, it seems so to me.

LIZA. How insoluble it all seemed at one time! And how suddenly everything was cleared up!

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. Well, Viktor, did you bring the wool?

KARENIN. I brought it, I brought it. (*Takes his bag and searches in it.*) Here is the wool; here is eau-de-Cologne and here are letters and here is an official document addressed to you. (*Hands it to his wife.*) Well, Anna Pavlovna, if you'd like to wash your hands, I will show you the way; and I must clean up a bit. It's almost dinner-time. Liza, I suppose you intend the lower corner-room for Anna Pavlovna, don't you?

LIZA (*Turning pale, holds the document with trembling hands as she reads it*).

KARENIN. What's the matter, Liza? What have you there?

LIZA. He is alive! My God! When I thought I was free of him! Viktor! What is this? (*Sobs.*)

KARENIN (*Takes the document and reads it*). This is horrible!

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. What is the trouble? Do tell us!

KARENIN. This is horrible! He is alive! And she is charged with bigamy and I with being a criminal! This

is a document from the Examining Magistrate: it is a summons for Liza!

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. What a dreadful man! Why has he done this?

KARENIN. All lies, lies!

LIZA. O, how I hate him! I don't know what I am saying . . . *(Exit weeping. KARENIN follows her.)*

SCENE III

ANNA DMITRIEVNA and ANNA PAVLOVNA

ANNA PAVLOVNA. How can it be that he is still alive?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA. All I know is that when Viktor once came into contact with this world of filth . . . they would drag him down. And here they have dragged him down! It's all fraud, all lies!

Curtain

ACT SIX

First Tableau

Court of the Examining Magistrate. The EXAMINING MAGISTRATE is sitting at a table, talking with MYELNIKOF. At one side a CLERK is arranging documents.

SCENE I

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE, MYELNIKOF, *the* CLERK

MAGISTRATE. No, I never spoke of that to her. She invented it and now blames me.

MYELNIKOF. She doesn't blame you but she is distressed.

MAGISTRATE. Well, no matter, I'll come to dinner. But now here's a very interesting case. Bring them in.

CLERK. Both of them?

MAGISTRATE (*Stops smoking his cigarette and conceals it*). No, Mrs. Karenin by herself—or to be more correct, Mrs. Protásosf—the name of Husband Number One.

MYELNIKOF (*Starting to leave*). So this is the Karenina!

MAGISTRATE. Yes. A nasty business! It seems so: I am only just beginning the investigation but it looks bad. Well, good bye. (*Exit MYELNIKOF.*)

SCENE II

The EXAMINING MAGISTRATE, CLERK; then LIZA in black and wearing a veil

MAGISTRATE. I humbly beg of you. (*Indicating a chair.*) I assure you, I deeply regret the necessity of being obliged to ask you certain questions but we really

are obliged to do so . . . Pray calm yourself and remember that you have the right to refuse answering these questions. Only it is my opinion that to tell the exact truth is better for you, yes and for all. It is always better and I might say, more advantageous.

LIZA. I have nothing to conceal.

MAGISTRATE. So then. (*Looks at the document.*) Your name, your station, your faith—all this I have here written down—correctly?

LIZA. Yes.

MAGISTRATE. It is charged against you that while knowing that your husband was still living, you married another man.

LIZA. I did not know it.

MAGISTRATE. And moreover that by bribery of your husband with money you persuaded him to commit a fraud—pretending to commit suicide, so that you might get rid of him.

LIZA. All that is untrue.

MAGISTRATE. Now then, permit me to ask a few questions. Did you not send him in July last year twelve-hundred rubles?

LIZA. That money was his—from a sale of his effects. And at that time, as I had separated from him and I was expecting him to agree to a divorce, I sent it to him.

MAGISTRATE. Just so. Very good. This money was sent on the seventeenth of July, that is to say, two days before his disappearance.

LIZA. It was probably on the seventeenth of July. I do not remember.

MAGISTRATE. And why was the application to the Consistory withdrawn at the same time and the case taken away from the lawyer?

LIZA. I do not know.

MAGISTRATE. Well then, when the Police summoned you to identify the corpse, how did you recognize it as that of your husband?

LIZA. I was so agitated at the time that I did not take a careful look at the body and I was so thoroughly convinced it was his that when I was asked that question, I replied, I thought so.

MAGISTRATE. Yes, a perfectly comprehensible agitation prevented you from a careful scrutiny. Very good! Now—ah, permit me to ask why you sent money every month to Sarátov, the very same city where your recent husband was still living?

LIZA. That money was sent by my husband. I can not say as to its destination, as it was not my secret. Only it was not sent to Fyodor Vasilyevitch. We were firmly convinced that he was no longer living. This I can truthfully tell you.

MAGISTRATE. Very good. One thing you will permit me to remark, dear lady, we are servants of the Law but this does not prevent us from being human. And believe me, I perfectly understand your position and sympathize with you. You were tied to a man who squandered his substance, was unfaithful to you—well, in a word caused misery to . . .

LIZA. I loved him.

MAGISTRATE. Yes, but it was perfectly natural that you should wish to be rid of him, and you chose this simpler course, not realizing that it would lead you into the commission of what is regarded as a crime—bigamy. This I understand. And the Judges¹ will understand it too. And so I should advise you to make a complete confession.

LIZA. There is nothing for me to confess. I have never lied. (*Bursts into tears.*) I am not needed longer?

MAGISTRATE. I would request you to remain here. I shall not . . . I shall not trouble you with further questions. Only please read and sign this—it is the report of the examination—if your answers are correctly transcribed. I will ask you to sit there. (*He indicates a*

¹In the manuscripts it reads not Judges (Sudyi) but Jurors (Prisyazhnuie). But this is a mistake, since such a suit is not submitted to Jurors as Lyof Nikolayevitch at first supposed, but is decided by the Judicial Court (Sudebnaya Palatá) in concert with the Board of Magistrates. This error was pointed out by N. V. Davuidof to Lyof Nikolayevitch, who intended to incorporate it in the corrections but did not get to it.—Russian Editor's Note.

chair by the window)—(*To the Clerk*) Ask Mr. Karénin in.

SCENE III

The EXAMINING MAGISTRATE, CLERK, LIZA. (*Enter*
KARENIN, *looking stern and solemn.*)

MAGISTRATE. I beg you to be seated.

KARENIN. No thank you. (*Remains standing.*) What do you wish of me?

MAGISTRATE. I am under the necessity of questioning you.

KARENIN. Under what authorization?

MAGISTRATE (*Smiling*). In my duty as Examining Magistrate I am compelled to question you as a defendant.

KARENIN. How is that? Accused of what?

MAGISTRATE. Of marriage with a woman with a living husband.² However, permit me to put the inquiries in the proper order. Be seated.

KARENIN. I thank you.

MAGISTRATE. Your name.

KARENIN. Viktor Karenin.

MAGISTRATE. Rank?

KARENIN. Kammerherr, Actual Councillor of State.

MAGISTRATE. Age?

KARENIN. Thirty-eight.

MAGISTRATE. Religion?

KARENIN. Orthodox. I have never before been tried or investigated. Well?

MAGISTRATE. Was it known to you that Fyodor Vasiljevitch Protasof was alive when you contracted a marriage with his wife?

KARENIN. It was not. We were both convinced that he had drowned himself.

MAGISTRATE. To whom in Sarátof did you send money each month, after the false report of Protasof's death?

²The manuscript reads "Bigamy." This is evidently an error, as Kerenin would not be guilty of bigamy but only of having married a woman with a living husband.—Russian Editor's Note.

KARENIN. I decline to answer that question.³

MAGISTRATE. Very good. Why did you send Mr. Protasof money—twelve-hundred rubles—on the seventeenth of July—just before his pretended death?

KARENIN. This money was turned over to me by my wife . . .

MAGISTRATE. By Mrs. Protasof?

KARENIN. By my wife to forward to her husband. This money she regarded as his property and having broken off relations with him she considered it wrong to keep that money.

MAGISTRATE. Now one further question: Why did you stop the divorce proceedings?

KARENIN. Because Fyodor Vasilyevitch undertook the affair himself and wrote me to that effect.

MAGISTRATE. Have you that letter?

KARENIN. That letter is lost.

MAGISTRATE. How strange that everything that might persuade a Court of Justice of the truth of your testimony has been lost and is missing.

KARENIN. Is anything further needed?

MAGISTRATE. Nothing further, except that I must fulfil my duty; but you have got to clear yourself. I have just advised Mrs. Protasof and I should advise you in the same way not to conceal what is evident to all, but to tell the whole truth just as it was. All the more because Mr. Protasof has taken it upon himself to make a clean breast of the whole business and will, it is probable, make the same admissions before the Court. I should advise you . . .

KARENIN. I would request you to confine yourself to the formal limits of your duties and refrain from proffering advice. May we go? (*He crosses over to LIZA. She rises and takes his arm.*)

MAGISTRATE. I am very sorry but I must detain you here . . . (*KARENIN turns around in surprise.*) Oh no, I don't mean that you are under arrest; although that would be more advantageous for getting at the truth I do not propose to adopt that course. Only I should like

³If it was to the watchmaker Yevgénief, why should he decline to answer? See Act IV, 2d Tableau, Scene V.—Tr.

to question Protasof in your presence, to confront him with you, so that you might more conveniently deny any misstatement. I will ask you to sit . . . Call in Mr. Protasof.

SCENE IV

The EXAMINING MAGISTRATE, CLERK, LIZA, KARENIN
(*Enter FEDYA, dirty, disreputable*)

FEDYA (*Addresses himself to LIZA and KARENIN*). Liza! Yelizavyeta Andreyevna! Viktor! I am not guilty! I wanted to do the right thing. But if I am guilty . . . Forgive me, forgive me! (*Bows low before them.*)

MAGISTRATE. I will ask you to answer certain questions.

FEDYA. Put them.

MAGISTRATE. Your name?

FEDYA. You know well enough.

MAGISTRATE. I will ask you to reply.

FEDYA. Well, Fyodor Protasof.

MAGISTRATE. Your rank, age, religion.

FEDYA (*after a silence*). How is it that you are not ashamed to ask such stupid things. Ask what is important and not mere trifles.

MAGISTRATE. I will request you to be more guarded in your expressions and to reply to my questions.

FEDYA. Well, if you are not ashamed, have it so! Rank, Kandidat; age, forty; religion, Orthodox. Well then, what next?

MAGISTRATE. Was it known to Mr. Karenin and to your wife that you were living when you left your clothes on the river-bank and disappeared?

FEDYA. Certainly not. I really intended to kill myself, but the . . . but there is no necessity of my telling you this. The point is—they knew nothing about it.

MAGISTRATE. How came you to make a different statement to the Police chinovnik?

FEDYA. What Police chinovnik? Oh, the one that came to me in the Rzhanof Lodging House? I was drunk

and said anything that came into my head—I don't remember what. It was all bosh. Now I am not drunk and I am telling the plain truth. They knew nothing about it. They believed that I was dead. And I was glad they did. And it would have remained so, if it hadn't been for that scoundrel Artemyef. And if anyone is guilty, I alone am.

MAGISTRATE. I understand your wish to be chivalrous, but the Law demands the truth. Why was money sent to you? (*FEDYA makes no reply.*) Did you receive through Simónof⁴ money sent to you in Sarátov? (*FEDYA is still silent.*) Why don't you reply? In the protokol it will be noted that the defendant did not answer these questions and this may seriously prejudice your case and theirs. So how about it?

FEDYA (*Maintains his silence for a time and then*). Oh, Mr. Magistrate, is this not shameful of you? Why do you stick your nose into other folks' affairs? Glad of holding the power and in order to show it off, torturing—not physically but morally—people who are a thousand times better than you are!

MAGISTRATE. I will ask you . . .

FEDYA. Ask me nothing! I will tell you everything I have in mind (*To the CLERK*) And you take it down! At least for once there will be rational human words in your protokol. (*Raising his voice.*) Here are three

⁴We incline to believe that the author is mistaken here in using the name Simónof intending to refer to Yevgenief, mentioned at the end of FEDYA's letter in Scene V, Second Tableau of Act IV. In order to bring into consonance these two places, it is our personal opinion that they refer to the same character, it would be sufficient, in the last instance, to change the name Simonof to Yevgénýef, even though Lyof Nikolayevitch did not write it so. In this way the puzzling circumstance would be eliminated from the Drama. Not feeling justified in introducing this correction into the text, we suggest that its introduction, in case of the production of the Drama on the stage, should be made for the sake of obviating any perplexity the spectator might find in following the course of the action. Russian Editors' note.

It will be remembered that FEDYA asked KARENIN and LIZA to send money to the watchmaker, YEVGENIEF, to help him in his difficulties. In the MAGISTRATE's question FEDYA is charged with receiving money: why should not a person named Simonof be here introduced as the intermediary?—TR.

human beings,—I, he, she. Their relations are snarled; there is a battle between good and evil—a spiritual battle beyond your ability to understand. This battle ended in a certain situation which resolved the whole difficulty. All three are satisfied. They are happy—they remember me lovingly. I, in my downfall, was happy in having done my duty, in having, good-for-nothing as I was, disappeared from their lives, so as not to interfere with what is the servitor of life and goodness. And here we are all alive. Suddenly a blackguard, a scoundrel, appears and demands that I take part in a blackmailing plot. I repulse him. He goes to you, as a champion of Justice, as the defender of Morality; and you, who on the twentieth of each month receive your pittance for your dirty work, don your uniform and with a frivolous mind, swagger around, trying to bulldoze us—people whose little finger is worth more than you, who wouldn't admit you into their vestibules! But you have "arrived" and are glad . . .

MAGISTRATE. I will have to put you out . . .

FEDYA. I am not afraid of anyone, because I am a dead man and nothing can be done to me. No situation could be worse than the one I am in. All right, put me out.

KARENIN. May we go?

MAGISTRATE. In a moment: the protokol must be signed.

FEDYA. How ridiculous you would be if you were not so vile!

MAGISTRATE. Take him out. You are under arrest.

FEDYA (*To KARENIN and LIZA*). So forgive me!

KARENIN (*Goes to him and offers him his hand*). Evidently it had to be so . . .

(*Exit LIZA. FEDYA bows low.*)

Curtain

Second Tableau

A corridor in the Circuit Court Building.⁵ In the background a glass door at which stands a MESSENGER. At the right a second door through which prisoners are brought. IVÁN PETROVITCH ALEKSANDROF in rags, approaches the first door and attempts to pass.

SCENE I

MESSENGER and IVÁN PETROVITCH

MESSENGER. Where are you going?—Can't come in here.—Sneaking in that way!

IVÁN PETROVITCH. Why can't I come in? The Law says the sessions are public. (*Sounds of applause are heard.*)

MESSENGER. You can't come in, that's all there is to it. It is forbidden.

IVÁN PETROVITCH. Clown! You don't know who you're speaking to. (*Enter a young LAWYER in dress-coat.*)

SCENE II

MESSENGER, IVÁN PETROVITCH and Young LAWYER

YOUNG LAWYER. What are you here for? Business?

IVÁN PETROVITCH. No, I am the public! But here this clown, this Cerberus, refuses to let me in.

YOUNG LAWYER. But you see this is not the public entrance.

IVÁN PETROVITCH. I know it, but he might let me in.

YOUNG LAWYER. Just wait a bit, there'll be a recess

⁵The words "in the Circuit Court" (в здании Okružnogo Suda) are left in accord with the manuscript since the Act takes place in Moscow. The Judicial Court (Sudebnaya Palatá) and the Circuit Court (Okružnui Sut) in Moscow are located in the same edifice.—Russian Editor's Note.

presently. (*As he is about to go, he meets Prince ABREZKOF.*)

SCENE III

MESSENGER, IVÁN PETROVITCH, *the YOUNG LAWYER and*
PRINCE ABREZKOF

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Kindly inform me how the case is coming on.

YOUNG LAWYER. The lawyers are pleading. Petrushkin is speaking. (*Applause again.*)

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Tell me, how are the defendants facing their situation?

YOUNG LAWYER. With great dignity, especially Karénin and Yelizavyeta Dmitrievna. They are not on trial—Society is. That's the general feeling. Petrushkin is taking advantage of fishing with that line.

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Well, how about Protasof?

YOUNG LAWYER. Terribly agitated! He is all of a tremble, but his mode of life accounts for that. He seems somehow rather irritated—has interrupted the Prokurór and the lawyers several times. He's in a peculiarly excited state.

PRINCE ABREZKOF. What in your opinion will be the result?

YOUNG LAWYER. It is hard to say.⁶ At all events lack of premeditation is admitted; however . . . (*A gentleman comes out. PRINCE ABREZKOF moves toward the door.*) Would you like to go in?

PRINCE ABREZKOF. Yes, I should.

YOUNG LAWYER. You are Prince Abrezkof?

PRINCE ABREZKOF. I am.

YOUNG LAWYER (*to the MESSENGER*). Let him go in! There is a vacant chair just at the left.

(*The MESSENGER admits PRINCE ABREZKOF. As he opens the door a lawyer making the plea is seen.*)

⁶In the manuscript it reads, also, "It is hard to say; the men of the jury are perplexed." As the trial would necessarily be conducted without a jury, the second half of the phrase is omitted in the text.—Russian Editor's Note.

SCENE IV

The MESSENGER, the YOUNG LAWYER and IVÁN PETROVITCH

IVAN PETROVITCH. Aristocrats! I am an aristocrat of the mind and that is higher!

YOUNG LAWYER. Well, excuse me. (*Passes along.*)

SCENE V

MESSENGER, IVÁN PETROVITCH and PYETUSHKOF
(PYETUSHKOF *enters hurriedly*)

PYETUSHKOF. Ah, how goes it with you, Ivan Petrovitch? How's the trial?

IVAN PETROVITCH. The lawyers are still pleading. But they won't let you in here.

MESSENGER. You there, cease your noise! This is no bar-room. (*Applause again. Doors are opened; lawyers, spectators, both men and women, pour out.*)

SCENE VI

The Same. A LADY and an OFFICER

LADY. It was fine! he actually drew tears!

OFFICER. Better than any novel! Only it is incomprehensible how she could have loved him so! A horrible face!

SCENE VII

The Same (another door opens: the Defendants come out; first LIZA and KARÉNIN; they walk along the corridor followed by FEDYA alone.)

LADY. Hush! Here he is! See how excited he is.
(LADY and OFFICER *pass by.*)

FEDYA (*approaching* IVAN PETROVITCH). Did you bring it?

IVAN PETROVITCH. Here it is. (*Hands him something.*)

FEDYA (*Puts it into his pocket and starts to walk away; catches sight of PYETUSHKOF*). It's stupid, disgusting, tiresome! Tiresome! Idiotic! (*Starts to go away.*)

SCENE VIII

The Same, and PETRUSHKIN, a Lawyer, stout, red-faced, lively, approaches

PETRUSHKIN. Well, Bátyushka, our case is getting along first rate, only don't go and spoil it all for me in your final statement.

FEDYA. Yes, but I am not going to speak. What have I to say to them? I am not going to.

PETRUSHKIN. Yes, but you'll have to. But don't get nervous. The case is as good as won now.* Only be sure to say exactly what you said to me—that if you are convicted, it will be merely because you did *not* succeed in committing suicide, that is, in doing what is regarded as a crime both by ecclesiastical and civil Law.

FEDYA. I shall say nothing.

PETRUSHKIN. Why so?

FEDYA. I don't want to speak and I will not! But just tell me one thing: in the worst event what can happen?

PETRUSHKIN. I have told you already: the worst thing would be exile to Siberia.

FEDYA. Exile for whom?

PETRUSHKIN. For you and your wife.

FEDYA. And in the best?

PETRUSHKIN. Church penance and of course dissolution of the second marriage.

FEDYA. That is, they will tie me to her again, that is tie her to me?

* *Vsyó dyélo v shlyapé.* The whole thing is in hot.

PETRUSHKIN. Yes, so it will have to be. But don't you get excited. And please, speak exactly as I have instructed you and above all things, not a word too much. And moreover . . . (*Noticing that they are in the midst of a listening crowd*) . . . I am tired; I'll go and sit down. And you had better get a little rest too, meanwhile.⁷ Above all, keep up your courage.

FEDYA. Can't there be any other decision?

PETRUSHKIN (*As he goes away*). None whatever.

SCENE IX

The Same (except PETRUSHKIN) and a COURT OFFICIAL

COURT OFFICIAL. Move on, move on! No loitering in the corridor!

FEDYA. In a moment. (*Takes out a pistol and shoots himself through the heart. He falls. All rush to him.*) It's of no consequence. This seems the best way . . . For Liza!

SCENE X

Enter from all the doors, spectators, the Defendants, Witnesses. LIZA first of all; then MASHA and KARÉNIN, IVÁN PETROVITCH and PRINCE ABREZKOF)

LIZA. What have you done, Fedya? Why did you do it?

FEDYA. Forgive me . . . because I could not . . . extricate you . . . in any other . . . way. Not . . . for your sake . . . it's better for me . . . You see . . . I was ready . . . long ago.

⁷ In the manuscript it reads, "while the jury are deliberating." These last words are omitted, because the trial is conducted without a jury. Aside from this the jury could not deliberate until after FEDYA's final testimony. Note PETRUSHKIN's words in Scene VIII. All this scene takes place evidently during the recess.—Russian Editors' note.

LIZA. You are going to live. (*A DOCTOR leans down to him and listens.*)

FEDYA. I don't need the doctor to tell me . . . Viktor, farewell! Oh Masha . . . you are too late . . . (*Sobs.*)
How good. . . . How good! (*Dies.*)

Curtain

THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE
DARKNESS

EXPLANATORY NOTE BY RUSSIAN EDITORS.—The Drama, "And the Light Shines in the Darkness," was not finished by Lyof Nikolayevitch. It was begun in the Eighties, then laid aside until work was resumed on it in the first decade of this Century. The Fifth Act is presented only in summary. The chief labor was expended on the First Act. . . .¹

In the earliest variants the epigraph is from the New Testament, "The Kingdom of God is like the leaven which the woman took." Luke ii, 21, 22.

In the last variant of the First Act there is no list of the characters and it was necessary to make it out. In the preceding variant the list is given but it does not wholly correspond to the last variant. Since it characterizes some of the dramatis personæ, it has a certain interest and we give it here in full:

- (1) NIKOLAI IVÁNOVITCH ZVYESDINTSEF, a wealthy man. Strong, energetic. Dressed in old-fashioned but good clothes.
- (2) MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA, his wife, a still handsome woman of forty, dressed simply but elegantly.
- (3) LYÚBA, their daughter, twenty-one, pretty, vigorous, lively, Dress suitable for the country.
- (4) STEPÁN, their son, who has just finished his school-studies, in lawn-tennis costume.
- (5) VÁNYA, a jolly gymnasium student in unbleached blouse.
- (6) MITROFÁN YERMÍLUITCH, VÁNYA's tutor, a University student, ill-favored, a revolutionist; in a pea-jacket.
- (7) ANNA IVÁNOVNA PETRISHCHÉVA, a widow, sister of MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA, a land-owner, portly, calm, good-natured.
- (8) LÍZANKA, her daughter, twenty-seven, gentle, sweet, industrious.
- (9) MANAGER, belonging to the petty Nobility.
- (10) HOUSE DOCTOR, a Liberal.
- (11) PRINCESS, fifty, affecting youth.
- (12) BORÍS, her son, just graduated from Petersburg University. Energetic, calm, and logically-rectilinear. Simple attire.
- (13) BARONESS, a Redstockist.
- (14) SÓNYA, Daughter of the Baroness, gay, lively, witty, sings, plays well. Very elegant.
- (15) LADS, engaged in matches (Lawn-tennis).
- (16) PRIEST, young.

¹Literary, or rather Political, censorship cut out not far from two-thirds of the Author's copy, so that in the large-paper edition of Tolstói's Works the Drama appeared to great disadvantage. Since the Revolution the omitted portions have been restored and are included in the present translation.—Tr.

The Manager, the Doctor and the Baroness do not appear in the last variant. The Princess (*Knyazeva*) becomes the Princess (*Knyagina*) Cheremshánova while Borís and Tónya are her children. The name Zvyezdintsef is changed to Sarúintsof, Petrishchéva to Kókhóvtseva.

The arrangement of the Scenes in the Author's manuscript is indicated only in the First Act and moreover not very punctiliously; in the others it is entirely lacking and this has been supplied by the Editors.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

NIKOLÁĭ IVÁNOVITCH SARUINTSOF.
MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA SARUÍNTSOVA, his Wife.
LYÚBA, their Daughter.
STYĖPA, } Their Sons.
VÁNYA, }
MISSI, their Daughter.
Young Children of the Saruínťsofs.
ALEKSANDR MIKHÁĭLOVITCH STAROVSKY, betrothed to LYÚBA.
MITROFÁN YERMILUITCH, VÁNYA's Tutor.
GOVERNESS at the SARUINTSOFS.
ANNA IVÁNOVNA KOKHÓVTSEVA, Sister of MARYA IVÁNOVNA.
PYOTR SEMYÓNOVITCH KOKHOVTSEF, her Husband.
LÍZANKA, her Daughter.
The NURSE at the SARUINTSOFS.
LACKEY at the SARUINTSOFS.
The PRINCESS CHEREMSHÁNOVA.
BORÍS, her Son.
TÓNYA, her Daughter.
DYÉVOTCHKA (Young Girl), her Daughter.
Young PRIEST.
IVÁN ZYABREF, Muzhík.
MALASHKA, his Daughter, with a little one.
BABA (Old Woman), his Wife.
PYOTR, a Muzhík.
SOTSKY (Captain of a hundred), Police Officer.
FATHER GERASIM, a Priest.
NOTARIUS (a Notary).
STOLYÁR (a Carpenter).
GENERAL.
The General's Aide.
CLERK of the Regimental Bureau.
A COLONEL.
SENTRY.
Two Body-guards.
POLICE OFFICER.
Police Officer's Secretary.
REGIMENTAL CHAPLAIN. (PRIEST.)
SENIOR DOCTOR in the Clinic for the Mentally Diseased in the Military Hospital.
JUNIOR DOCTOR, in the Same.
GUARD, of the Same.
Sick OFFICER.
TAPYÓR (Pianist).
COUNTESS.
ALEKSANDR PETRÓVITCH.
MUZHIKS, OLD PEASANT WOMEN.
STUDENTS, LADIES. DANCING COUPLES.

THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS

A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS

(188(?)—1902)

ACT ONE

The Scene discloses a covered terrace in a House of Wealth. The Terrace fronts on a flower-garden, a lawn-tennis court and a croquet ground. CHILDREN with their GOVERNESS are playing croquet. On the Terrace are sitting MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA SARUÍNTSOVA, a handsome elegant Lady of forty; her Sister, ALEKSANDRA IVÁNOVNA KOKHÓVTSEVA, a postly, opinionated, stupid Lady of forty-five and her Husband, PYOTR SEMYÓNOVITCH KOKHOVTSEF, a stout flabby Gentleman in Summer garb with a pince-nez. They are at a covered table. Samovár and coffee. They are drinking coffee and PYOTR SEMYÓNOVITCH is smoking.

SCENE I

MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA, ALEKSÁNDRA IVÁNOVNA and PYOTR SEMYÓNOVITCH

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. If you were not my sister but a stranger and if Nikolaï Ivánovitch were not your husband but an acquaintance I should have regarded this as original and very charming, and possibly I should have myself supported him in it. J'aurais trouvé tout ça très gentil. But when I see your husband making a fool of himself, a perfect fool of himself, I cannot help telling you what I think. And I am going to tell him—

your husband. Je lui dirai son fait, au cher Nikolai Ivanovitch.¹ I'm not afraid of anyone.

MARYA IVANOVNA. I am not in the least offended. Don't I see it myself? Only I think that it is not so very important.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Yes, you think so, but I will tell you this—that if you don't put an end to it, you will be paupers, du train que cela va.²

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. Why! you don't mean paupers, with their big property!

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVITCH. Yes, paupers. But please, my dear, don't interrupt me. In your eyes, whatever men do is always right . . .

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. Well, I don't know: I am only saying . . .

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. You never know what you say, because if you men begin to make fools of yourselves, il n'y a pas de raison que ça finisse.³ I only say that if I were in your place I would not put up with this. J'aurais mis bon ordre à toutes ces lubies.⁴ Now just what is the trouble? The husband, the head of the family, is engaged in no occupation, lets everything go and gives everything away, et fait le généreux à droit et à gauche.⁵ I know how that will end. Nous en savons quelque chose.⁶

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH (*To MARYA IVANOVNA*). Now Marie, explain to me exactly what this new tendency is. Of course, liberals, zemstvos, constitution, schools, reading-rooms and tout ce qui s'en suit⁷—I understand about such things. Well, socialists, les grèves⁸—the eight-hour day—I understand that much. But what is this thing? Explain it to me.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Why, he talked to you about it last evening.

¹ I will tell dear Nikolai Ivanovitch the whole truth.

² The way things are going.

³ There is no reason for stopping.

⁴ I should put my foot down on all these follies.

⁵ And plays being generous right and left.

⁶ We know a thing or two about that.

⁷ And all that follows from them.

⁸ Strikes.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. I confess I did not understand. The Gospels, the Sermon on the Mount, the Church is not necessary . . . But how are we to worship and all that sort of thing?

MARYA IVANOVNA. Well, the main thing is that he pulls everything down and leaves nothing in its place.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. But how pray did this begin?

MARYA IVANOVNA. It began last year on the death of his sister. She was very dear to him and her death affected him deeply. He began to be very gloomy, talked all the time about death and, as you know, was taken ill himself. And so after his attack of typhoid, he was entirely changed.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. Yet when he came to us last Spring in Moscow he was nice and played whist. Il était très gentil et comme tout le monde.⁹

MARYA IVANOVNA. Yes, but even so he was entirely different.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. You mean, in exactly what way?

MARYA IVANOVNA. Well, a perfect indifference to his family—just an *idée fixe*—the Gospels! He read it for days at a time; he did not sleep at night, would get up and read, making notes and summaries; then he began to go off and see bishops and hermits—to consult them about religion.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. Well, did he attend Communion?

MARYA IVANOVNA. Up to this time, ever since our marriage, that must be about twenty-five years, he had not attended Communion. But now, at a monastery, he partook of the Sacrament . . . just once and immediately after the preparation decided that the Sacrament was not necessary, that going to church was not necessary either!

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Just as I say, not the least consistency.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Yes, till within a month he never missed a single service—not a fast; and then suddenly everything of the kind becomes unnecessary! But do talk with him!

⁹He was very charming and like everybody else.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. I have talked with him and I will again.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. Yes. But it's of no use . . .

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. No, nothing is of any use for you, because men have no religion at all.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. Now permit me to speak! I say that is not the point at issue at all. If he does away with the Church, what on earth is the use of the Gospels?

MARYA IVANOVNA. Why, don't you see, one must live according to the New Testament, according to the Sermon on the Mount and give away everything.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. But how can you live, if you give everything away?

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Now, where does he find in the Sermon on the Mount that one must shake hands with lackeys?¹⁰ It says in it, "Blessed are the meek," but nothing about shaking hands.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Yes, of course, he is swept off his feet, just as he has always been swept off his feet, just as at one time he was carried away by Music, by hunting, by founding schools. But that does not make it any easier for me.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. What took him to town?

MARYA IVANOVNA. He did not tell me, but I know that he went on account of timber-cutting on our estate. The muzhiks have been cutting down our trees.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. The case of the fir-grove?

MARYA IVANOVNA. Yes, they were fined and a prison-sentence imposed upon them, and this morning he told me their case was coming up in the Assembly and I am convinced that he has gone to it.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. He will forgive them and tomorrow they will be back cutting down your park.

MARYA IVANOVNA. That's the way it goes! They break down our apple-trees, they trample over the green meadows; he forgives them everything.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. Extraordinary!

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. That's why I say it is impossible to let this continue. Why, if it goes on so, tout y

¹⁰ Original: *tchto nado shake hands s lakeyami dyelat'!*

passera.¹¹ I think that you, as a mother, are under obligations prendre tes mesures.

MARYA IVANOVNA. What pray can I do?

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Do? Stop him, make him see that this sort of thing is impossible. You have children! What an example for them!

MARYA IVANOVNA. Of course, it's hard, but I always try to be patient and hope that he will get over this, just as he has got over similar fads.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Yes, but aide-toi, et Dieu t'aidera.¹² He must be made to feel that he is not the only one and that he must not live in this way.

MARYA IVANOVNA. The worst of all is that he no longer pays any attention to the children and I am obliged to decide everything by myself. Now on the one hand I have a nursing baby and on the other the older ones, the boys and girls, who require care and guidance: and I am alone in everything. He used to be such an affectionate, solicitous father. But now he is perfectly indifferent. Yesterday I remarked to him that Vanya is neglecting his studies and will be plucked again, but he said that it would be far better for him to leave the Gymnasium altogether.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. But to go where?

MARYA IVANOVNA. Nowhere. This is the terrible part of it—that everything is wrong, but he won't say what is to be done.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. That is strange.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. What is strange about it? This is our commonest habit—to condemn everything and do nothing to better them.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Now Styepa has graduated and must choose a career but his father will not say a word to him. He wanted to take a position under one of the Ministers: Nikolai Ivanovitch told him he'd better not. He wanted to enter the Horse Guards: Nikolai Ivanovitch entirely disapproved. He asked, "What shall I do then?—Not go to farming?" And Nikolai Ivanovitch said, "Why not take up farming? It's far better than

¹¹ Everything will be made way with.

¹² Help yourself and God will help you.

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to be in an office." So what is he to do? He comes to me and asks my advice and I have to decide everything. But all the means are in his hands.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Well, he ought to be told all this straight up and down.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Yes, he ought; I will speak to him.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. And say up and down that you can not go on so, that you are fulfilling your duties and he must fulfill his, but if he won't, then let him give you full power.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Oh, this is so unpleasant.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. I will tell him, if you wish. Je lui dirai son fait!

SCENE II

The Same, and a Young PRIEST

PRIEST (*Entering, confused and agitated; he has a book and he shakes hands with the others*). I've come to see Nikolai Ivanovitch, so to speak, to bring back a book.

MARYA IVANOVNA. He's gone to town. He'll be back presently.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. What is this book you have brought?

PRIEST. Oh, it's a work by Mr. Renan, so to speak,—*"Life of Jesus."*

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. What's that! What kind of books do you read?

PRIEST (*In confusion he lights a cigarette*). Nikolai Ivanovitch . . . his Honor gave it to me to read.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA (*Contemptuously*). Nikolai Ivanovitch gave it to you to read! What! Do you agree with Nikolai Ivanovitch and Mr. Renan?

PRIEST. Certainly, I do not. If, so to speak, I did, then I should not be, as they say, a Servant of the Church.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. But if you were, as they say, a true Servant of the Church, why don't you confute Nikolai Ivanovitch?

PRIEST. Everybody, one may say, has his own notions

about these subjects, and his Honor, Nikolai Ivanovitch, one may say, affirms correctly about many things, but . . . he is in error about the principal thing, one may say, on the subject of the Church.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA (*Scornfully*). And what, pray, are the many things in which Nikolai Ivanovitch affirms correctly? Now is it correct that to be in accordance with the Sermon on the Mount one must give his property away to other people and reduce his family to beggary?

PRIEST. The Church in a way, sanctifies, so to speak, the family, and the Church Fathers have given, in a certain way—a—their blessing to the family, but the highest perfection demands—a, so to speak—a, renunciation of earthly blessings.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Yes, that's the way ascetics have acted, but it seems to me ordinary mortals must act simply as becomes every good Christian.

PRIEST. Nobody can know what he is called upon to do.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Now you are married, of course.

PRIEST. I am.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. And you have children?

PRIEST. Two.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Then why don't you renounce family blessings—and here you are smoking cigarettes!

PRIEST. 'Cause of my weakness, so to speak . . . my unworthiness.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Yes, I see, instead of making Nikolai Ivanovitch listen to reason, you uphold him! That is wrong, I tell you, downright wrong!

SCENE III

The Same, and NURSE

NURSE (*Enters*). Why, you don't even hear—Nikolushka is crying. Please come and nurse him.

MARYA IVANOVNA. I'm coming, I'm coming.

(*Rises and hurries out.*)

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SCENE IV

The Same, without the NURSE and MARYA IVÁNOVNA

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. I'm so terribly distressed about my sister. I see how worked up she is. It's no joke to carry on a house. Seven children, one—a nursing baby and in addition, all these strange notions. And I really believe there is something wrong here. (*She indicates her head.*) I will ask you: What kind of a new religion have you found?

PRIEST. I don't understand . . . so to speak . . .

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Please stop temporizing with me. You understand very well what I am asking.

PRIEST. Yes, let . . .

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. I ask you what kind of a belief it is by which he makes out that it is necessary to shake hands with all the muzhiks and lets them cut down the woods, and hands them out money for vodka and ruins the family?

PRIEST. I . . . don't und . . .

MARYA IVANOVNA. He says this is Christianity; you are an Orthodox priest, so you must know and you must say whether Christianity commands us to steal.

PRIEST. Yes, I . . . a . . .

MARYA IVANOVNA. Then why are you a priest, wearing long hair and a cassock?

PRIEST. Well, they don't ask us . . .

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Why don't they ask you? I am asking you. He said to me yesterday that the Gospel commands, Give to him that asks. Now in what sense is that to be understood?

PRIEST. Well, I think . . . in its simple meaning . . .

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Not in its simple meaning. I think, but as we are taught that every man has what is intended for him to have.

PRIEST. To be sure, however . . .

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Well now it is plain that you are on his side, just as I have been told. And this is bad, I will tell you up and down. If it were a school-

ma'am or some immature youth encouraging him in this—but you, in your profession ought to realize what a responsibility rests on you!

PRIEST. I am trying . . .

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. What kind of a religion is this where he doesn't attend church and neglects the sacraments! And you, instead of bringing him to reason, read Renan with him and interpret the New Testament in your own way.

PRIEST (*in agitation*). I can't answer you. I am, so to speak, dumbfounded.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Okh! If I were a Bishop I would teach you to read Renan and smoke cigarettes!

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. Mais cessez au nom du ciel. De quel droit? ¹³

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Please don't teach me! I am sure the Bátyushka is not angry with me. Supposing I have spoken my whole mind? It would have been worse, if I had held my tongue. Isn't that right?

PRIEST. Forgive me if I have not expressed myself properly, forgive me!

(*Awkward silence. Enter LYUBA and LIZANKA.*)

SCENE IV

(LYÚBA, a pretty, energetic girl of twenty, daughter of MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA; LÍZANKA, older than she, daughter of ALEKSANDRA IVÁNOVNA. Both carry baskets and wear handkerchiefs around their heads: they are going after mushrooms. They exchange greetings, one with her aunt and uncle, LÍZANKA with her Father and Mother and with the PRIEST).

LYUBA. But where's mama?

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. She's just gone to nurse the baby.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. Now look here! bring a good lot. To-day a little girl fetched some splendid white ones. And I would go with you, but it's hot.

"But do stop, for God's sake. What right have you?

LIZANKA. Come with us, papa!

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Go, go, you're growing obese!

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. Very good, please wait till I get some cigarettes.

SCENE VI

The Same, without PYOTR SEMYÓNOVITCH

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. But where are all the young folks?

LYUBA. Styepa has gone to the station on his bicycle. Mitrofan Yermiluitch went to town with papa; the youngsters are playing croquet and Vanya is out on the door-step having a frolic with the dogs.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Tell me, has Styepa come to any decision?

LYUBA. Yes, he has put his application as a volunteer. Yesterday he spoke impertinently to papa.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Well you see it's hard for him. Il n'y a pas de patience qui tienne.¹⁴ The lad must begin his life-work and he is told to go to farming!

LYUBA. Papa did not tell him so. Papa said . . .

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Well it amounts to that. But Styepa must begin his life-work and whatever idea he broaches, it's all wrong. Ah, here he comes.

(The PRIEST goes to one side and opening his book, reads. STYEPA rides up on his bicycle.)

SCENE VII

The Same and STYÉPA

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Quand on parle du soleil, on en voit les rayons.¹⁵ We have just been talking about you. Lyuba says you spoke impolitely to your father.

STYEPA. Not so very. There was nothing out of the way. He told me his opinion and I gave him mine. It

¹⁴ He is at the end of his patience.

¹⁵ Speak of the sun and you will see its rays.

is not my fault if our convictions don't jibe. Now Lyuba who doesn't know a thing about it makes a snap-judgment.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Well, and what decision did you come to?

STYEPA. I don't know what papa decided; I am afraid he is not quite clear in his own mind. But as for myself I decided to enlist in the Horse Guards. Here at home we are always creating peculiar difficulties. But this whole matter is quite simple. I have graduated from school. I have got to do my term of service. To serve with coarse drunken officers in the army is distasteful to me and so I am entering the Guards where I have friends.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Yes, but why didn't papa approve?

STYEPA. Papa! What is the use of talking about it? He is now under the influence of his *idée fixe* and won't see anything except what he wants to see. He says that military service is the most disgusting of all and therefore one ought not to serve and so he refuses to give me any money.

LIZANKA. No, Styepa, he did not say so. I was there. He said that if it was impossible to get out of serving, then one ought to be drafted, but if one entered as a volunteer it signified that this service is desirable.

STYEPA. Well you see I am the one to serve and not he. He has done his time.

LIZANKA. Yes, but he did not say that he would not give you any money but that he couldn't take part in a matter contrary to his convictions.

STYEPA. It's not a question of convictions here, but I've got to serve and that's all there is of it.

LIZANKA. I only say what I heard.

STYEPA. I know you agree with papa in everything. 'Auntie, you know Liza is always on papa's side.

LIZANKA. Whatever is right . . .

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Yes, I know Liza is always on the side of anything foolish. She has a keen scent for any folly. *Elle flaire cela de loin.*

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SCENE VIII

The Same. VANYA

(Rushes in with a telegram in his hand. He is in a red shirt and is accompanied by the dogs.)

VANYA (*To LYUBA*). Guess who is coming!

LYUBA. I can't guess: who is it? (*Stretches out her hand. VANYA holds back.*)

VANYA. I won't give it to you and I won't tell. It is the one who will make you blush.

LYUBA. Stupid! Who's the telegram from?

VANYA. There she is blushing, she's blushing! Aunt Alina, isn't it true, she blushed?

LYUBA. What nonsense! Who sent it? Aunt Alina, who sent it?

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. The Cheremshanofs!

LYUBA. Ah-h!

VANYA. I should think so—ah-h-h! Why do you blush?

LYUBA. Auntie, show me the telegram! (*Reads.*) "Shall arrive on the three o'clock mail-train. The Cherem-ashanofs." That means the Princess, Boris and Tonya! Well I for one shall be very glad.

VANYA. Very glad indeed! Styepa, look how she's blushing.

STYEPA. Now let up on pestering her: it's always one and the same theme.

VANYA. Yes, that's because you're courting Tonya yourself. You might draw lots, for a brother can't marry a sister and a sister a brother.

STYEPA. Quit your gabbing! Better let up! How many times have I warned you!

LYUBA. Say, if they're coming on the mail-train, they'll be here directly.

LIZANKA. That's so. So we'd best not go away.

(Enter PYOTR SEMYÓNOVITCH with cigarettes.)

SCENE IX

The Same, and PYOTR SEMYÓNOVITCH

LYUBA. Uncle Petya, we are not going.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. Why not?

LYUBA. The Cheremshanofs will be here in a few minutes. We'd better play one set of tennis. Will you join us, Styepa?

STYEPA. If you like.

LYUBA. Vanya and I against you and Lizanka. That suit you? Then I'll get the balls and call the children.
(*Exit.*)

SCENE X

The Same, without LYUBA

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. Well, I seem to be left out.

PRIEST (*Prepares to depart*). My respects.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. No, please remain; I want to speak with you. Besides, Nikolai Ivanovitch will soon be here.

PRIEST (*Sits down and begins to smoke again*). It might be some time.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. There! Some one is coming now; it must be he!

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. Who is this Cheremshanova? Was she a Golitsuin before she was married?

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Why yes, the same Cheremshanova who used to live in Rome with her aunt.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. Well, I shall be glad to see her again. I haven't seen her since we were in Rome together, when she played duets with me. She sang delightfully. I suppose she has her two children with her.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Yes, she is bringing them with her.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. I didn't know that they and the Saruintsofs were so intimate.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Not intimate, but they were

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together abroad last year and I suspect la princesse a des vues sur Louba pour son fils. C'est une fine mouche, elle flaire une jolie dot.¹⁶

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. But the Cheremshanofs themselves were rich, weren't they?

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. They used to be. The prince is living but he has squandered his whole estate and drunk himself out of decent society. She petitioned his Imperial Majesty and so, having saved a few crumbs, she left him. But in spite of that she has given her children a splendid education. Il faut lui rendre cette justice.¹⁷ Her daughter is a fine musician and her son has got through the University and is very clever. Only Masha, I suspect is not very well pleased. Guests just at this time are inopportune. But here is Nicolas!

SCENE XI

The Same, and NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Hello, Alina, How are you, Pyotr Ivanovitch? (*To the PRIEST*) Ah! Vasili Nikanorovitch! (*Shakes hands with him.*)

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. There is coffee left. Shall I pour you some? It's rather cold but it can be heated up. (*Rings.*)

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. No, thanks. I have had a bite. But where is Masha?

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Nursing the baby.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. And well?

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. All right. Tell me, did you accomplish your business?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I did; yes. On the whole, if there is tea or coffee, let me have some. (*To the PRIEST*) Ah, you have brought the book: did you read it? I have been thinking about you all the way.

¹⁶ The princess has designs on Lyuba for her son; she is a keen one—she smells a big dowry.

¹⁷ That credit must be given her.

SCENE XII

The Same, and a LACKEY

(*Enter LACKEY, bows. NIKOLAI IVANOVITCHII shakes hands with him. ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA shrugs her shoulders and exchanges glances with her husband.*)

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Please put more charcoal in the samovár.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. It's not necessary, Alina. I don't care for it, but if I did I would drink it as it is.

SCENE XIII

The Same, and MISSI

MISSI (*Seeing her father, she hurries from the croquet-ground and hangs about his neck*). Papa, come with me!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*Caressing her*). Directly, directly. Let me have a bite of something to eat. Go and play, I will come!

SCENE XIV

The Same, without MISSI

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Tell me, were the peasants found guilty at the Sessions?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*Sits down at the table, drinks his tea greedily and eats*). Yes, they were found guilty. But they themselves confessed what they had done. (*To the PRIEST.*) I thought that Renan would be a little contrary to your views . . .

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. But you opposed the verdict?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. (*Showing annoyance.*) Of course I opposed it. (*To the PRIEST.*) The question for you, evidently, it not the divinity of Christ or the history of Christianity but the Church . . .

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ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. That is: 't was this way. They confessed et vous leur avez donné un démenti.¹⁸ They did not steal but took it.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*Begins to talk with the PRIEST but turns resolutely to ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA*). Alina, golúbushka, do cease pursuing me with pin-pricks and inuendoes!

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. But I'm not . . .

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Now if you are serious in wanting to know why I can not go to law with peasants because they cut the wood they needed . . .

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. I imagine they need this samovár also.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. So if you want me to tell you why, I can not permit these men to be put into jail and to be ruined because they cut down ten trees in a forest which is supposed to be mine . . .

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Supposed by everyone.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. There, arguments again! I'd rather play with the dogs on the lawn. (*Exit on the terrace.*)

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Now even if it is granted—which I never can—that this forest is mine, now I have nine-hundred desyátins¹⁹ of forest and as there are about five-hundred trees to a desyátin, I must have not far from four-hundred and fifty thousand trees—isn't that so? These men cut down ten, say one-forty-five thousandth part: now is it worth while, is it possible, to tear a man away from his family for that and put him in jail?

STYEPÁ. Yes, but if they are not punished for this one-forty-five-thousandth part, then very shortly all the rest of the forty-four-thousand nine-hundred and ninety-nine parts will also be cut down.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Well, I only said this for your aunt's ears, but in reality I have no right whatever to this forest. The land belongs to all, or rather it can not belong to any private individual. We have never expended any labor at all on it.

¹⁸ You refute their testimony.

¹⁹ A desyátin is 2400 square sazhen—about 2.70 acres.

STYEPA. Yes, but you've saved, you have had it guarded.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. How have I accomplished these savings and have I not kept guard of the woods myself . . . Well, it's impossible to make this clear to a person who has no sense of shame for having beaten down another person.

STYEPA. But no one is beating others down.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. It's just the same if you feel no sense of shame, because when without working, you make use of the labor of another and you can't prove this to him and all that political economy which you studied in the university is calculated only to justify the position in which we find ourselves.

STYEPA. On the contrary the science demolishes all kinds of preconceived notions.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. This, however, seems to me quite trivial. What is important to me is that I know that if I had been in Yefím's place, I should have done just as he did and after I had done it I should have been in despair if they had put me in jail and consequently—since I desire to do unto others as I should wish them to do unto me—I can not appear against him and I am doing all I can to have him released.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. Well, if that's so, one can't own anything.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Then it's vastly more profitable to steal than to work!

STYEPA. You never meet an argument! I say that one who saves has the right to enjoy his savings. (*All speaking at once.*)

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*Smiling*). Now, really I don't know which to answer. (*To PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH.*) One ought not to own anything.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. And if one ought not to own anything, one ought not to have clothes or a crumb of bread, one ought to give away everything and cease to live.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. But it is impossible to live as we do.

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STYEPA. That is, we must die. Consequently this doctrine does not fit in with living.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Not at all: it was given to us for life only. Yes, we must give away everything. Not merely give away the forest which we make no use of and have never even really seen, but we must give away our clothes and our food.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Even the children's?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Yes, the children's and not only but ourselves too. The whole teaching of Christ hangs on this. We must use all our powers in order to give ourselves . . .

STYEPA. That means dying!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Certainly and if you die for your friends that will be a beautiful thing both for yourself and for your friends. But the truth is that man is not spirit alone but spirit incarnate. And the flesh inclines to live for itself while the Spirit of Enlightenment yearns to live for God, for others, and life among all men does not proceed on the animal plane alone but in a middle path, a sort of compromise, and the closer it comes to being a life for God the better it is. And consequently the more we strive to live for God the better and the animal existence will manage itself.

STYEPA. Why, pray, a middle path, a compromise? If it's proper to live so, then why not give everything away and die?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. And it would be beautiful! Strive to do this and it will be well with you and with others.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Not a bit of it! this is blind and complicated. *C'est tiré par les cheveux.*²⁰

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Well, what can be done about it? It's impossible to thresh it out in words. So, let it go at that!

STYEPA. Indeed we'd better let it go at that; I simply can't understand you. *(Exit.)*

²⁰ Far-fetched.

SCENE XV

The Same, without STYÉPA

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*Addresses the PRIEST*). What sort of impression did the book make on you?

PRIEST (*In agitation*). Well, so to speak, the historical side has been worked out amply, but its conclusiveness, —what shall I say?—its authenticity is not complete, what shall I say, it's too incomplete. Neither the divinity nor the—what shall I say?—the undivinity of Christ can be proved historically; there's one incontrovertible proof . . .

(*During this conversation the ladies slip out*²¹ *and the PRIEST is left alone with NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH.*)

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. You mean, the Church?

PRIEST. Well, of itself, the Church . . . what shall I say?—the testimony of . . . of creditable persons, what shall I say?—of—of the Saints.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Certainly it would be fine if there existed such an infallible body of witnesses that we could pin our faith to them! Would there were such! But the fact that this is desirable is not proof that there is.

PRIEST. I deem that . . . it proves this very thing. The Lord could not . . . what shall I say?—leave his law subjected to the . . . the possibility of . . . of distorted—a misinterpretation but he was to establish . . . what shall I say . . . such a custodian of . . . of his truths, so that these truths might not . . . might not be subjected to . . . distortion.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Well and good. But you see you were obliged to prove these same truths and now you must prove the truth of the custodianship of the truths.

PRIEST. Here is where we must, shall I say? have faith.

²¹ In the original it reads: "first the ladies and then STYÉPA and then last of all PYOTR SEMYÓNOVITCH exeunt. Their exit had already been indicated: hence the change.

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NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Have faith—it is necessary to have faith; one can not get along without faith but not to believe in what others tell me, but in what we are brought to by the course of our thoughts, of our reason. . . . Faith in God in the true eternal life.

PRIEST. Reason may deceive; every one has his own reason.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*hotly*). Now this is horrible blasphemy! This one holy instrument was given us by God for detecting the truth, the one thing that can unite us all. But we have no faith in it!

PRIEST. Yes, but how can we have faith in it, when . . . so much . . . disagreement . . . what shall I say? . . .

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Where is there disagreement? That twice two is four and that one must not do unto others as he would not be done by, and that there is a cause for everything and we all accept truths similar to these because they are in accordance with our reason. But that God showed himself to Moses on Mount Sinai or that Buddha flew up to heaven on a sun-beam or that Mahomet flew up to heaven or that the Christ went up in the same way—in regard to these and every such act we are all at odds.

PRIEST. No, we are not all at odds . . . if we are in the Faith; we are all united in one . . . one belief in God, in Christ.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. No, not even in this are you all united, but are all going in different directions. And besides why should I believe you more than a Buddhist lama? Is it because I was born in your Faith?

(*Dispute among the children playing: Out—no, not out—*

VANYA: I saw it go.—*During the conversation lackeys have set the table for tea and coffee again.*)

You say, the Church accomplishes unity. On the contrary, the most horrible dissension has always proceeded from the Church. “How often would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens” . . .

PRIEST. That was . . . before Christ but Christ has been gathering us.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. True, Christ has gathered us together but we have practised disunion because we misunderstood him. He destroyed every kind of Church.

PRIEST. Why then the words, "Tell the Church?"

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. It is not a question of words; besides these words do not refer at all to the Church. What counts is the spirit of the teaching. Christ's teaching is universal and includes all faiths and admits nothing exclusive—neither the Resurrection nor the Divinity of Christ nor the Sacraments—nothing indeed that tends to disunite.

PRIEST. Then this . . . what shall I say?—your interpretation of Christ's teaching, but Christ's teaching is wholly founded on his divinity and resurrection.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Precisely this is the dreadful thing about the Churches: they divide by declaring themselves possessed of the complete, unquestionable, infallible truth! "We and the Holy Ghost have willed." This began as early as the first Apostolic Council. From that time they began to assert that they had come into possession of the complete and *exclusive* truth. Now if I say that God exists, that there is a First Cause of the Universe, everyone agrees with me and this predication of God unites us; but if I should say that there is a God—Brahma or the Hebrew Divinity or the Trinity, then such a God divides us. Men like to be united and for this purpose they originate various means of union but they ignore the one unquestionable method of unification—the ardor for Truth. It is like this: as if in a colossal edifice where the light falls down into the center men should take pains to gather in groups in corners instead of all going toward the light. If they did that, without thinking of becoming united, they would all become united.

PRIEST. But how are the people to be guided . . . unless they have—what shall I say?—the precise truth?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. That's the dreadful thing about it! Each one of us must save his soul, must himself do God's work, but we are busy in saving, in teaching others. And what do we teach? Why it's horrible even to think of! We teach them now, at the end of the Nineteenth

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Century, that God created the world in six days, then brought on a flood, put all the wild beasts into an ark and all the stupidities, the obscenities of the Old Testament and then that the Christ commanded all men to be baptized with water or to believe in the absurdity and the abomination of the Atonement without which salvation is impossible and then he flew up into the sky and took his seat there—in a heaven which doesn't exist—on the right hand of the Father. We have got accustomed to this but now really it is dreadful! A little child, unspoiled, with a mind open to goodness and truth, asks what the world is, how it is ruled and, instead of explaining to him the doctrine of Love and Truth which has been revealed to us, we assiduously try to cram into his head every imaginable kind of horrifying absurdities and filth, ascribing it all to God! Why, this is dreadful! Why, it is a crime worse than any other in the world. And we and you with your Church are committing it. Pardon me!

PRIEST. Yes, if the teaching of Christ is regarded in this way . . . what shall I say? rationally, why . . . then it is so.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. However you regard it, it will be always so.

(*Silence*) (*Enter ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA*)

SCENE XVI

The Same, and ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. The PRIEST bows in farewell greeting

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Good-bye, Batyushka. He will pervert you with his arguments: don't listen to him!

PRIEST. Search the Scriptures. The matter is too important . . . to . . . what shall I say?—to be disregarded.
(*Exit.*)

SCENE XVII

The Same, without the PRIEST

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Truly, Nicolas, you have no mercy on him. Even though he is a priest, yet you see he is only a boy; he can't have any sound convictions, any settled views . . .

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Give him time to settle his views, to grow hard in fraud? No! Why should I? Yet he is a good, sincere man.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. But what would become of him if he should believe you?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. He needn't believe me, but if he should see the truth, it would be good—good both for him and for all.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Yes, if it were good then all would believe you, but as it is, on the contrary, no one believes you and your wife least of all. Even she can not believe you.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Who told you so?

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Well, just you explain it to her! She will never understand, nor I either—I can't understand it and no one in the world can understand why one ought to look after outside people and abandon one's own children. Now explain this to Masha.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. And Masha will assuredly understand. And—forgive me, Alina, if it were not for outside influences, to which she is very much inclined to yield, she would understand me and would go as far as I do.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. So far as to beggar her children for the sake of drunken Yefim et compagnie? Never! Now if you are angry with me, forgive me, but I can not help speaking.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I am not angry. On the contrary, I am even very glad that you have spoken your whole mind and given me an opportunity—challenged me to lay before her all my views. This very day, on the way home, I was thinking about this and I will lose no

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time in telling her and you will see that she will agree with me, for she is sensible and good.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Well, as to that permit me to have my doubts.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. No, I have no doubt at all. You see, this is no trumped up device of my own; it is only what we have all known and what the Christ revealed to us.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Yes, according to you Christ revealed this but according to me he revealed something quite different.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. There can't be anything else.

(Shouts from the tennis-players.)

LYUBA. Out!

VANYA. No, we saw it.

LIZANKA. Out, out, out!

VANYA. That's a lie.

LYUBA. In the first place, it's rude to say, "It's a lie!"

VANYA. I call it rude to lie.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Stop a moment, don't let's quarrel, but just listen!

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Well, I'm listening.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Now, is it true that we may die at any moment and go into nothingness or to God who demands of us that we live in accordance with his will?

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Well?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Well, what can I do in this life except what is demanded of me by the Supreme Judge in my soul, Conscience, God. And Conscience, God, demands that I count all men equal, that I love all men, that I serve all men.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. And your own children!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Of course, my own children, but that I do it is all that Conscience commands me to do. Most important of all is that I realize that my life does not belong to me—nor yours to you—but to God who sent us into the world and who demands of us that we do his will. But his will . . .

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. And you will persuade Masha of this?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Certainly.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. And she will give up educating her children suitably and abandon them? Never!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Not only she will understand, but you will too—that there is nothing else to it.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Never!

(*Enter MARYA IVANOVNA.*)

SCENE XVIII

The Same, and MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Well, Masha, tell me, I hope I didn't wake you up this morning.

MARYA IVANOVNA. No, I was not asleep. Did you have a good journey?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Yes, very good.

MARYA IVANOVNA. But why on earth are you drinking tea when it's all cold! It reminds me, we must get ready for our guests. You know the Cheremshanofs are coming. She's bringing her son and daughter.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Well, if they are agreeable to you, I'm very glad.

MARYA IVANOVNA. I like her and her young people. Only it's somewhat inconvenient.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA (*Rises*). Now you talk with her and I will go and watch the game. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XIX

The Same, without MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA

(*Silence, after which NIKOLAI IVÁNOVITCH and MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA both begin talking at once*)

MARYA IVANOVNA. It's inconvenient because you and I must have a talk.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I was just saying to Alina . . .

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MARYA IVANOVNA. What?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. No, you speak.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Well, I wanted to talk with you about Styepa. You see, some decision must be made. Poor fellow, he is in despair; he doesn't know what will become of him. He came to me but I can't help him to a decision.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. What is there for you to decide? He can decide for himself.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Yes, but you know that he wants to enlist in the Guards and to do this he needs a certificate from you and he must have money for his support, but you refuse to give it to him. (*She becomes agitated.*)

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Masha, for God's sake, don't get excited, but listen to me! It is not whether I give or don't give. I consider going as a volunteer into military service either a stupid, senseless thing to do, worthy of a savage—if a man doesn't realize all the hideousness of the act—or else shameful, if he does it from ulterior motives. . . .

MARYA IVANOVNA. Yes, but you see everything now seems to you stupid and savage. But he's got to live. You have had your day.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*Growing hot*). I lived it when I did not understand, when no one had ever told me; but it's his business, not mine.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Why isn't it yours? You refuse him money.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I can not give him what does not belong to me.

MARYA IVANOVNA. What do you mean, "Doesn't belong to you?"

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. The labor of others doesn't belong to me. The money that I give him I have to take from others. I have no right to it and I can not do it. As long as I manage the estate I can not manage it otherwise than as my conscience dictates. I can not give away what is wrung from the toil of the overworked peasants to be squandered on Body-guards' debaucheries. Take over the estate and then I shall not be responsible.

MARYA IVANOVNA. But you know that I do not want

to do that and I can not. I am obliged to bring up the children and nurse them and bear them. This is cruel . . .

NIKOLAI IVANOVNA. Masha, golúbushka! Can't you see this is not the point at issue! When you began to speak and I began at the same instant, I wanted to have a heart-to-heart talk with you. Can't you see? it is impossible this way! We live together and yet do not understand each other. Sometimes it seems as if we purposely misunderstood each other.

MARYA IVANOVNA. I want to understand but I do not, I do not understand you. I do not understand what has come over you.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Well then, do understand! Though now is not the time, God knows when we shall find the time. Don't try so much to understand me, but rather understand yourself, your own life. You see it is impossible to go on living as we do, not knowing what we are living for!

MARYA IVANOVNA. We have lived as we have, and got along very well. (*Noticing his expression of annoyance.*) Well, very good, well I'm listening.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I lived conventionally,²² that is not thinking why I was living; but the time came when I was horrified. Very well then, we are living on the labor of others, compelling others to labor for us, bringing children into the world and educating them to do the same. Well, old age is coming on, and death, and I ask myself: Why have I lived? Is it to propagate parasites such as I am? Ay! and the chief thing is that this kind of life is not joyous. You see it is only endurable, while, as in Vanya's case, vital energy bursts forth from you.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Yes, but all of us are living in this way.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. And all are unhappy.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Not by any means!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I at all events have come to see that I was horribly unhappy and that I am causing you and the children unhappiness and I have asked myself:

²² Orig. *tak, tak*, so, so, the words italicized.

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"Can it be that God created us for this?" And just as soon as I thought this out I began to feel that it was not so. I asked myself: Why, why, did God create us?
(*Enter a lackey.*)

SCENE XX

The Same, and LACKEY

MARYA IVANOVNA (*Does not listen to her husband but speaks to the servant*). Bring the hot cream.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. And I found the answer in the Gospel—that we do not live for ourselves. This plainly revealed itself to me when once I began to think over the parable of the vinedressers. You know it?

MARYA IVANOVNA. I know—yes, the laborers.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. This parable somehow more clearly than anything else showed me wherein my mistake lay. I used to think that my life was my own just as the laborers thought that the vineyard was their property and it was all dreadful: but just as soon as I realized that my life is not mine but that I was sent into the world for the purpose of doing God's work . . .

MARYA IVANOVNA. That is what we all have known.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Well, if we know this, then we can not continue to live as we are living, since our whole life is not only not a fulfilment of His will, but, on the contrary, is a perpetual violation of it.

MARYA IVANOVNA. How is it a violation, when we live without doing harm to anyone?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. How are we not harming anyone? This is the very way the vine-dressers understood. You see we . . .

MARYA IVANOVNA. Yes, I know the parable. Well, he gave them all the same pay!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*After a pause*). No, but that's not the point. But one thing, Masha, think that we have just one life and that we can either live it in a hallowed way or waste it.

MARYA IVANOVNA. I can not think and reason things out. I wake up in the night, I nurse the baby, I am

always busy with housekeeping and instead of your helping me, you tell me things I do not understand.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Masha!

MARYA IVANOVNA. And now these visitors besides!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. No, we will talk about it again. Yes? (*Kisses her.*)

MARYA IVANOVNA. Yes, only to be as you used to be!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I can not, but do listen to me . . . (*The sound of harness-bells and an approaching carriage is heard.*)

MARYA IVANOVNA. Not now! They have arrived. I must go and meet them.

(*Exit around the corner of the house. STYEPA and LYUBA go in the same direction.*)

VANYA (*Comes leaping over a bench.* I don't give it up; we'll finish playing it. Lyuba! well, what is it?

LYUBA (*gravely*). Please, no nonsense!

(*ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA with her husband and LIZANKA come out on the terrace. NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH walks up and down buried in thought.*)

SCENE XXI

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH, ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA, PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH and LIZANKA

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Now how was it? Did you persuade her?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Alina! What is taking place between us is an important matter and jests are unbecoming. I am not persuading her; life, the Truth, God is bringing her to conviction and therefore she can not fail to be convinced; if not to-day, then to-morrow, if not to-morrow, then . . . It is dreadful that none of us ever has the time. Who has just come?

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. The Cheremshanofs—Catiche Cheremshanova, whom I have not seen for eighteen

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years. The last time we met we sang together "La ci darem la mano." (*Sings.*)

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA (*To her Husband*). Please do not interrupt and don't get the notion that Nicolas and I have been quarreling. I am telling the truth. (*To NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH.*) I am not quarreling but it was strange to me that you wanted to persuade Masha just when she had made up her mind to have a talk with you.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Well, that's all right. Here they come. Please tell Masha that I shall be in my own room. (*Exit.*)

Curtain

ACT TWO

The Same Country-house [The SARUÍNTSOFS'] a week later. The Stage presents a great drawing-room. The Tea-table is laid: Samovár, coffee and tea-service. A Grand Piano and Music-stand are by the wall. At the Table sit MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA, the PRINCESS [CHEREMSHÁNOVA] and PYOTR SEMYÓNOVITCH.

SCENE I

MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA, PYOTR SEMYÓNOVITCH *and the*
PRINCESS

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. Yes, Princess, it doesn't seem so long ago—does it?—when you were singing *Rosina* and I . . . But now the part of *Don Basilio* wouldn't suit me very well!

PRINCESS. Now our children might take those parts! Other times other . . .

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. Yes, these times are Comteian . . . But your little Princess is very—now, seriously—she plays finely! What are they doing? they can't be still sleeping!

MÁRYA IVANOVNA. They were out riding last night in the moonlight. They got home very late. I was nursing the baby and heard them.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. And when will my truly pious spouse be coming back? Have you sent for her?

MÁRYA IVANOVNA. Yes, she went off early this morning. She ought to be here right soon.

PRINCESS. Do you mean that Aleksandra Ivanovna went just on purpose to fetch Father Gerásim!

MÁRYA IVANOVNA. Certainly, this notion occurred to her last evening and she flew off at once.

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PRINCESS. Quelle énergie! Je l'admire.

PYOTR SEMYONOVITCH. Oh, pour ceci ce n'est pas ce qui nous manque.¹ (*Takes out a cigar.*) Meanwhile I'll go for a smoke and take the dogs for a run in the park until the young people come down. (*Exit.*)

SCENE II

The PRINCESS and MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA

PRINCESS. I'm not sure, dear Marya Ivanovna, but I'm inclined to think that you take all this thing too much to heart. I understand him. He's in such a high-strung state. Now suppose he should give things away to the poor! . . . All of us are too much inclined to be selfish.

MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA. Oh yes, if it were confined to that, but you don't know him, you don't know the whole story. It is not mere aid to the poor but it's a complete overturn, the destruction of everything.

PRINCESS. I shouldn't wish to interfere in your family life but if you would permit me . . .

MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA. Certainly, I look upon you as one of the family—especially now!

PRINCESS. I should advise you to announce to him your demands in an open and straightforward way and to come to an understanding with him regarding some limitation . . .

MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA (*in irritation*). He won't hear to any limitation; he wants to give everything away. He wants me, at my time of life, to become a cook, a laundress!

PRINCESS. You don't mean it! How extraordinary!

MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA (*Produces a letter*). Here we are alone and I am glad to tell you the whole story. Yesterday he wrote me this letter: I will read it to you.

PRINCESS. What! You and he live in the same house and he writes you letters! How strange!

MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA. No, I can understand it. He gets

¹What energy! I admire it—Oh we don't lack that.

so excited when he talks. Of course I have become anxious about his health.

PRINCESS. What did he say in his letter?

MARYA IVANOVNA. Here it is. (*Reads.*) "You reproach me because I am putting an end to our life as it has been and not offering anything new, not saying how I should like to have our family conducted. Whenever we begin to talk about it, we grow excited, and for that reason, I am writing. I have already told you many times why I can not go on living as we have and I am unable to convince you by a letter that we can not live in that way but that we must live in accordance with Christianity. You can do one of two things: either believe in the Truth and elect to follow me or put your trust in me, give yourself up to me and trustingly follow me." (*Interrupts her reading.*) I can do neither the one thing nor the other. I do not consider that it is necessary to live as he wishes,—it is so tragic for the children, and I can not put my trust in him. (*Reads.*) "This is my plan: We will give all our land to the peasants; we will reserve for ourselves fifty desyátins and the garden as it is, the orchard and the intervale. We will endeavor to cultivate this ourselves but we will not exert compulsion either on ourselves or on the children. What we retain might bring us in about five-hundred rubles . . .

PRINCESS. Live on five-hundred rubles—with a family of seven children. It is impossible!

MARYA IVANOVNA. Well, here's the whole plan: which includes giving up the house for a school and going to live ourselves in the gardener's izba, in two rooms!

PRINCESS. Yes, I also begin to think there's something in this that requires a physician. What reply did you make?

MARYA IVANOVNA. I said I could not do it; that if I were alone I would follow him anywhere, but there are the children . . . Why, only think—I am nursing Nikolenka—I say: we can't let everything go to smash! Was this what I married you for? I am already getting along in years and not strong any more. Just think of bearing nine children and nursing them . . .

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PRINCESS. Why, I never dreamed this had gone so far!

MARYA IVANOVNA. So it stands; and I have no idea what is going to come of it. Yesterday he gave the muzhiks at Dmítrovki their rent and he wants to give them the estate outright.

PRINCESS. I think you ought not to permit it. It is your bounden duty to protect your children. If he can't look after the property, let him turn it over to you.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Yes, but I don't want it.

PRINCESS. You ought to do it for the sake of the children. Get him to transfer the property to you.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Sister Sasha suggested it to him; he replied that he hasn't the right, that the land belongs to those who work on it and that it is his duty to give it to the peasants.

PRINCESS. Why, now I realize that is far more serious than I had any conception of.

MARYA IVANOVNA. And the priest, the priest is on his side.

PRINCESS. Yes, I noticed that yesterday.

MARYA IVANOVNA. So sister has gone to Moscow; she wanted to talk it over with a lawyer and especially to bring back Father Gerasim to reason with him.

PRINCESS. Yes, I think Christianity doesn't mean us to ruin one's own family.

MARYA IVANOVNA. But he has no confidence in Father Gerásim. He's so stubborn and when he talks you know I can't argue with him. And the terrible thing about it is that it seems to me he's right!

PRINCESS. That's because you love him.

MARYA IVANOVNA. I don't know the reason, only it's dreadful, dreadful! Everything is in such a state of uncertainty. And this is Christianity. (*Enter NURSE.*)

SCENE III

The Same, and NURSE

NURSE. Please, Nikolenka is crying; he's waked up.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Yes, yes, I'm coming! I'm so

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wrought up that it makes his poor little stomach ache!
I'm coming, I'm coming!

(Enter NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH by another door; he has documents in his hand)

SCENE IV

MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA, *the PRINCESS* and NIKOLAI
IVÁNOVITCH

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Oh, it is outrageous!

MARYA IVANOVNA. What is the trouble?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Why, Peter's going to jail, just because of a little fir-tree of ours!

MARYA IVANOVNA. How's that?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. It was this way: He chopped it down, was haled before the Justice who sentenced him to three months in jail. His wife's been to see me.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Well, what's outrageous about it?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. It's too late now! Only one thing is to be done—not to own the forest! And I'm not going to own it any longer. Now, what's to be done about it? . . . I'm going to him to see if the wrong we have inflicted on him can't be righted.

(He goes out to the terrace and meets BORIS and LYUBA)

SCENE V

The Same, BORIS and LYUBA

LYUBA. Good morning, papa! Where are you going?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I've been to the village and I'm going to the village again. They're just dragging a starving man to jail because he . . .

LYUBA. You don't mean Peter!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Yes, Peter.

(Exit.)

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SCENE VI

The Same, without NIKOLAÏ IVÁNOVITCH

LYUBA (*Sits down at the samovar*). Will you have coffee or tea?

BORIS. Either.

LYUBA. It's always the same thing! I see no end to this.

BORIS. I don't understand him. I know the people are poor and ignorant; they need to be helped but not by encouraging thievery.

LYUBA. But how?

BORIS. By everything we do. All our knowledge should be devoted to their service but one can't sacrifice our lives.

LYUBA. But papa says that's the very thing we ought to do.

BORIS. I don't understand. One can serve the people without spoiling one's life. I want to arrange my life that way. If you only . . .

LYUBA. I want what you want and I have no fears.

BORIS. Now, these ear-rings, this gown . . .

LYUBA. The ear-rings can be sold and one can wear a different kind of gown, but still there's no need of looking like a fright.

BORIS. I want to have another talk with him. Do you think he wouldn't like it if I should go to the village after him?

LYUBA. Not at all. I see that he has grown quite fond of you and yesterday he kept addressing you more than the others.

BORIS (*Finishes drinking his coffee*). Then I'll go.

LYUBA. Yes, do go and I will run up and wake Lizanka and Tónya. (*Exeunt.*)

Curtain

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The Scene changes. A Street. IVÁN ZYABREF covered with a tulup is lying near an Izbá

SCENE I

IVÁN ZYÁBREF, *alone*

IVAN. Malashka!

(From behind the izbá comes a wee little girl with a baby boy in her arms. The baby is wailing)

SCENE II

IVÁN ZYABREF and MALASHKA *with the infant*

IVAN. Water! I'm thirsty! (MALASHKA runs into the izbá, whence the infant's crying can be heard and returns with a bowl of water.) What makes you keep beating the baby and making him yell? I am going to tell your mother.

MALASHKA. Go and tell her! He yells 'cause he's starved.

IVAN (*Drinks*). You might ask the Dyemkins for some milk.

MALASHKA. I did; couldn't get any. There wasn't no one to home.

IVAN. Akh! If only death would come! Has the bell rung for dinner—what?

MALASHKA. A long time ago. Yes, it rung. Here comes the Master!

(Enter NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH)

SCENE III

The Same, and NIKOLAÏ IVÁNOVITCH

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. What did you come out here for?

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IVAN. So many flies in there and hot, too.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Well are you warm enough here?

IVAN. I'm all on fire.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Where's Peter,—at home?

IVAN. Home—this time o' day? He went to the field after the oats.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. What's this they tell me about his going to jail?

IVAN. It's true; the Sotsky has gone to the field after him.

(Enter a Peasant woman big with child, carrying a sheaf of oats and a rake and she instantly strikes MALASHKA on the back of her head.)

SCENE IV

The Same, and BABA

BABA. What did you leave the baby for? Just hear him yell! Just to gad about the street!

MALASHKA *(Cries)*. I only just came out. Batya wanted a drink.

BABA. I'll give it to you! *(Sees the Master.)* How are you, Batyushka Nikolai Ivanovitch? They're a nuisance! I'm tired to death with everything laid on me so! And now they're lugging off my last laborer to prison, while this lazy lout is lounging round.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. What's that you say? Why, he's sick!

BABA. He sick but I'm not sick? When it comes to working, he's sick, but for carousing he ain't sick nor for yanking my hair out. Let him perish like a cur—what do I care?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. It's a sin to speak so!

BABA. I know it's a sin, but I can't control myself. Here I am with child and I have to work for two. All the rest have done their harvesting and we ain't a quarter done reaping yet. I ought to be at work binding the

sheaves but how can I? I had to come home and look after these brats.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I'll hire the reaping done for you and the binding too.

BABA. What's the binding? I'll 'tend to that myself, if only the reaping could be finished up. But tell me, Nikolai Ivanovitch, do you s'pose he's going to die? He's in a bad way.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I don't know. Oh, he seems pretty sick! I think he'd better be taken to the hospital.

BABA. O Lord! (*Begins to weep.*) Don't take him away! Let him die here! (*To her husband.*) What did you say?

IVAN. I want to go to the hospital. I'm worse off than a dog here.

BABA. Oh, I d' n' know what to do. I'm at my wits ends. Malashka, go 'n git dinner ready.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. What have you for dinner?

BABA. Why, 'tatoes and bread. No real vittles!

(*Goes into the izba. Squealing pigs, wailing children are heard*)

SCENE V

The Same, without BABA

IVAN (*Groans*). O Lord, if I could only die!
(*Enter BORIS.*)

SCENE VI

The Same, and BORIS

BORIS. Can't I be of service to you?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Here no one can be of service to others. The evil is too chronic. One can only be of service to oneself by seeing what we base our happiness on. Take this family—five children, the wife big with child and the husband ill, and nothing to eat except

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potatoes and at this moment the question is to be decided whether they are to have a sufficiency for the coming year or not. And there's no help possible. How can one help? Suppose I hire a laborer: but what kind of a laborer? One who has given up his own farming from drink, from poverty.

BORIS. Pardon me, then what are you trying to do here?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I am learning my own position. I am finding out who does our garden, builds our house, makes our clothes for us, feeds us, clothes us.

(Muzhiks with sickles, peasant-women with rakes pass by, bowing low)

SCENE VII

The Same, MUZHÍKS and BÁBUI

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH *(Halting one of them)*. Yermil, tell me, don't you want to earn some money, getting in the harvest for these folks?

YERMIL *(Shaking his head)*. I'd be mighty glad to, but it ain't possible. My own ain't reaped yet and we're driving to get it in. How's Ivan? Is he going to die?

ANOTHER MUZHIK. Here's *Dyadya* Sevastian, wouldn't he do it?—*Dyadya* Sevastian! They're hiring some one to reap.

SEVASTIAN. Take the job yourself. One day now means a year's food. *(They pass on.)*

SCENE VIII

The Same, without MUZHÍKS and BÁBUI

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. They are all half-starved—with nothing but bread and water, they are sick, many of them old. That old man there—he has a rupture and it hurts him, but he worked from four o'clock in the morning

till ten at night—half dead as he is! While we!—Now is it possible for us, realizing this, to live at ease calling ourselves Christians? Well, I won't call it Christians but simply not wild beasts.

BORIS. But what's to be done about it?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Not take part in the evil—not own the land, not devour their labor. But I don't know how to bring this about. Now the fact of the matter is this—at least it has been so with me. I lived and did not realize how I was living. I did not realize that I am a son of God and all of us are sons of God and brethren. Now when I began to comprehend this, to comprehend that all men have equal rights to life, my whole being was upset. However, at this moment I can not explain it to you. I will say one thing: that hitherto I was blind—just as my family are blind—but now my eyes have been opened and I can not help seeing. And now that I see, I can not go on living so. However, more anon. Now I must do what I can.

SCENE IX

The Same, the SOTSKY, PETER, his WIFE and a BOY

PETER (*Falls at NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH'S feet*). Forgive me, for Christ's sake or I'm ruined now. How can the woman get along? If you'd only bail me out at least!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I'll go and write a petition. (*To the SOTSKY.*) Can't he stay here for the present?

SOTSKY. Our orders are to deliver him at the Police station.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Go then, I'll hire some one; I'll do what I can. I am directly responsible for this. How can we live in such a way? (*Exit.*)

Curtain

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THE SCENE CHANGES

SCENE I

The Same Country Mansion as before. Outside, it is raining. The Drawing-room, with a Grand Piano. TONYA has been playing a Schumann Sonata and is still at the Piano. STYEPA is standing near by. BORÍS is sitting. LYUBA, LIZANKA, MITROFÁN YERMÍLITCH, and a PRIEST are all deeply moved.

LYUBA. The Andante-movement—how charming!

STYEPA. Ah but the Scherzo! Yet the whole thing is delightful!

LIZANKA. Very beautiful!

STYEPA. But I had no idea that you were such an artist! That was truly masterly playing. One can see that difficulties no longer exist and you think only of the expression and you bring it out with such marvelous skill!

LYUBA. And in such lofty style!

TONYA. But I have the feeling that it is not adequate . . . Much was still lacking.

LIZANKA. How could it be better! It was wonderful!

LYUBA. Schumann is fine but yet Chopin gets a deeper hold on the heart.

STYEPA. More lyrical.

TONYA. One can't compare them.

LYUBA. Do you remember his *Prélude*?

TONYA. The one called Georges Sand's? (*Plays the beginning of it.*)

LYUBA. No, not that one. That is lovely, but hackneyed. However, play it, please. (*TONYA plays what she remembers of it and then breaks off.*)

LYUBA. No, play the one in *ré mineur*.

TONYA. Akh, it is a wonderful thing. It is something elemental—older than the world.

STYEPA (*Laughs*). Yes, yes. Now play it please. But no, you are tired. And as it is, we have spent a charming morning, thanks to you.

TONYA (*Gets up and looks out of the window*). Mu-zhiks again.

LYUBA. This is what makes music precious. I understand Saul! I am not tormented by an evil spirit, but I understand him. No other Art can make one forget everything as Music does (*Goes to the window*). Whom do you want to see?

MUZHUKS. We've been sent to Nikolai Ivanovitch.

LYUBA. He's not in; wait a while!

TONYA. And you're going to marry a man who has no comprehension of music!

LYUBA. That can not be so!

BORIS (*Absently*). Music . . . No I like Music, or rather, I don't dislike it. But I prefer something simpler—I like vocal Music.

TONYA. But isn't that Sonata charming?

BORIS. The principal thing is, that it's not essential and I'm rather sorry for anyone who makes this an important element in his life.

(*There are sweetmeats on the table. All partake of them.*)

LIZANKA. How jolly it is to have a sweetheart here and sweetmeats as well!

BORIS. That's not my fault, but mama's!

TONYA. And it's fine of her!

LYUBA. Music is priceless because it overmasters you, takes possession of you and bears you away out of reality. Here everything was gloomy, and suddenly you began to play and instantly all grew bright. Really grew bright!

LIZANKA. Now Chopin's Valses—they are hackneyed, but still . . .

TONYA. This one . . . (*Plays.*)²

(*Enter NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH; he greets TONYA, STYEPA, LIZANKA, LYUBA, MITROFAN YERMILOVITCH and the PRIEST.*)

²In the original MS. follows this passage, expunged by the author:

LIZANKA. Now, Styepa!

STYEPA. Can't one dance to a Chopin Valse?

LIZANKA. Certainly! Let's try. (*They dance.*)

TONYA. No, I'd rather give you a Strauss Waltz. (*Plays.*)

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SCENE III

The Same, and NIKOLAI IVÁNOVITCH

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Where's mama?

LYUBA. In the nursery, I believe. (STYEPA rings for a servant.) Papa, how marvelously Tonya plays! But where have you been?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. At the village.

(A LACKEY enters.)

SCENE III

The Same and LACKEY

STYEPA. Bring another samovár.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*Greets the LACKEY, offering to shake hands with him*). How do you do? (*The LACKEY is embarrassed and hastens out.*)

(*Exit* NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH *also.*)

SCENE IV

The Same, without LACKEY *and* NIKOLAI IVÁNOVITCH

STYEPA. Poor Afanasi! He was awfully embarrassed. I don't see the point of it. Just as if *we* were to blame for something!

SCENE V

The Same, and NIKOLAI IVÁNOVITCH

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*Comes back*). I was on my way to my own room without letting you know what was in my mind. And to do so is not right, so it seems to me. (*To* TONYA.) If what I am about to say is offensive to you, who are our guest, forgive me, but I can not

refrain from speaking. You just remarked, Lyuba, that the young Princess plays well. All of you here, seven or eight of you, healthy young men and women, sleep till ten o'clock, have been drinking, have been eating and are still eating and making music and discussing it; while at the place from which I have just come, they were up at three in the morning; some of them indeed out guarding the horses at pasture, not sleeping all night, and the old, the sick, the infirm, children, women, with babies or about to have them working to the limit of their strength in order that we here may enjoy the fruit of their toil. And that's not the whole story: at this very moment, one of them, the last, the only working-man in the family, at this very moment, I say, is dragged off to jail, because this Spring he chopped down one single fir-tree out of a hundred thousand growing in a forest called *mine*! And here we are, with clean faces and hands, wearing fine clothes, having left the slops in our bed-rooms to be cared for by slaves, while we eat and drink and compare Schumann and Chopin as to which affects us the most, drives away our melancholy! This was what I was thinking about as I passed by you and now I have told you so. Now think it over: can we go on living this way? (*Stops, agitated.*)

LIZANKA. True, true!

LYUBA. If one thinks so about it, one can't.

STYEPA. Why not? I don't see why we may not talk about Schumann even if folks are poor. The one does not exclude the other. If people . . .

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*Angrily*). If you have no heart, if you are made out of wood . . .

STYEPA. Well, I'll shut up!

TONYA. The problem is terrific—the problem of our time, and yet we must not be afraid of it, we must look the reality straight in the eyes, so as to solve it.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. It won't do at all to wait for a solution of the problem by general measures. Any one of us may die to-day or to-morrow. How can I go on living and not suffer from internal discord?

BORIS. Of course, there is one way: not to be a partner in it.

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NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Well, forgive me if I have offended you. I had to speak out what I felt. (*Exit.*)

SCENE VI

The Same, without NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH

STYEPА. How can one help being a partner in it? Our whole existence is involved in it.

BORIS. That's why he says that first of all we mustn't have any private possessions, must change our whole lives: for instance I must live so as not to need to be served but to live for the service of others.

TONYA. Well, I see that you have entirely gone over to the side of Nikolai Ivanovitch.

BORIS. Yes, for the first time, it has dawned on me. And because of what I saw in the village! All we need to do is to take off our spectacles, as it were, through which we look at the life of the people, so as to comprehend the connection between their sufferings and our pleasures and it is all ended.

MITROFAN YERMILUITCH. Yes, but the way to do so doesn't involve ruining one's own life.

STYEPА. It's remarkable how Mitrofan Yermiluitch and I have two opposite points of view and yet agree in this: those were my very words—Ruining one's own life.

BORIS. It's easy to understand. Both of you like to live comfortably and for that reason you want to continue such a mode of life as would provide this comfort for you. You (*Addressing* STYEPА) want to preserve the present order of things but Mitrofan Yermiluitch wants a new one.

(LYUBA and TONYA *whisper together*. TONYA *goes to the piano and plays a Chopin Nocturne*. All stop talking.)

STYEPА. Now that is fine. It settles everything!

BORIS. It obscures and delays everything.

(During the music MARYA IVANOVNA and the PRINCESS enter and take seats, listening. Before the Nocturne is ended harness-bells are heard.)

SCENE VII

The Same, MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA and the PRINCESS

LYUBA. It's Auntie! (*Runs to meet her.*)

(The Music continues. Enter ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA and FATHER GERASIM, a Priest with a Pectoral Cross, and a NOTARY. All arise.)

SCENE VIII

The Same, ALEKSANDRA IVÁNOVNA, FATHER GERASIM and the NOTARY

FATHER GERASIM. Pray continue. It's pleasant.

(The PRINCESS goes to him to receive his blessing; likewise the Priest VASÍLI.)

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. I did precisely what I told you I should. I found Father Gerasim and you see I have persuaded him to come—he was going to Kursk—and I have fulfilled my mission. And I have brought the lawyer also. He has the paper all ready—it has merely to be signed.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Wouldn't you like some luncheon?

(The NOTARY lays his papers on the table and goes out.)

SCENE IX

The Same, without the NOTARY

MARYA IVANOVNA. I am very grateful to Father Gerasim.

FATHER GERASIM. How could I do otherwise? To be

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sure, it is out of my way but in accordance with Christianity, I thought it my duty to make this visit.

(ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA *whispers something to the young people who after consulting together step out on the terrace, all except BORIS. The PRIEST also starts to join them.*)

SCENE X

MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA, ALEKSANDRA IVÁNOVNA, *the PRINCESS*, FATHER GERASIM, *the PRIEST* and BORÍS

FATHER GERASIM. Just wait a moment. You, as a pastor and Spiritual Father might both get and give some help. Remain, unless Marya Ivanovna has some objection.

MARYA IVANOVNA. No indeed, I'm just as fond of Father Vašili as if he were in the family. I have even asked his advice but on account of his youth he has too little authority.

FATHER GERASIM. Certainly, certainly.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA (*Comes closer*). Now you see, Father Gerasim, you are the only one who can help him and meet his arguments. He is a man of great intelligence and learning but, you know, mere learning may lead one into error. Some kind of delusion has taken possession of him. He insists that to be in accordance with the law of Christ a man ought not to own any property. But can that be so?

FATHER GERASIM. The allurements, the pride of intellect, obstinacy. The Church Fathers explained this question satisfactorily. But how did all this come about?

MARYA IVANOVNA. If I may tell you the whole story: when we were married he was utterly indifferent to Religion, and so we lived and lived happily—the first twenty years were our best years. Then he began to brood, perhaps because of the influence of his sister or of his reading. Only he took up reading the Gospels and thinking about them and then suddenly he became extravagantly religious and began to attend church and to

repair to the monks. And then suddenly he gave this all up and completely altered his manner of life: he began to do manual work himself, refused to allow the servants to wait on him and, to cap the climax, he is now giving away his property. Yesterday he gave away a forest and the land. I am very apprehensive—I have seven children. Do talk with him! I will go and ask him if he will see you. *(Exit.)*

SCENE XI

The Same, without MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA

FATHER GERASIM. These days many are falling away. Tell me, is the estate his or his wife's?

PRINCESS. His. That's the misfortune of it.

FATHER GERASIM. And what is his rank?

PRINCESS. His rank is not high. Cavalry-captain, I believe. He used to be in the Army.

FATHER GERASIM. Many have gone astray in this way. In Odessa a lady fell under the influence of Spiritualism and for a time did a good deal of mischief; still, by God's help she was brought back into the Church.

PRINCESS. The main thing, you understand is this: my son is to marry his daughter. I have given my consent. But the young girl is accustomed to luxury and therefore must be safeguarded and not become wholly dependent on my son. Though we must admit he is very industrious and has a remarkably fine character.

(Enter MARYA IVANOVNA and NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH)

SCENE XII

The Same, MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA and NIKOLAI IVÁNOVITCH

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Greeting, Princess! Greetings . . . Pardon me, what is your full name?

FATHER GERASIM. Do you not wish to have my blessing?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. No, I do not.

FATHER GERASIM. Gerasim Fyodorovitch. Very glad! (*A Lackey brings luncheon and wine.*) It's fine weather, and favorable for getting in the harvest.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I take it for granted that you are here at the request of Aleksandra Ivanovna for the purpose of turning me from my errors and bringing me back into the path of Truth. If this is so then let us not go round Robin Hood's barn but proceed straight to business. I do not deny that I disagree with the teachings of the Church. I did at one time accept them but since then I have ceased to do so. But I wish with all my heart to find the Truth and I will instantly accept it if you prove it to me.

FATHER GERASIM. What do you mean when you say that you do not believe the teachings of the Church? What is there to believe in, if not in the Church?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. In God and his Law, as revealed to us in the Gospels.

FATHER GERASIM. The Church teacheth that very Law.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. If she did teach it, then I should believe in her; but it is not so at all, she teaches the contrary.

FATHER GERASIM. The Church can not teach the contrary, because she was established by the Lord himself. It is written: "I give all power unto you . . . And on this rock I will build my Church and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against her."

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. This was not said in regard to this at all. And even if it is conceded that Christ established a Church how am I to know that yours is that Church?

FATHER GERASIM. Because it is said: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Yes, and that was not said either in reference to my point and proves nothing.

FATHER GERASIM. How can one deny the Church? She alone provideth salvation.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I certainly did not deny her

until I became convinced that she upholds everything contrary to Christianity.

FATHER GERASIM. She can not err because she alone possesseth the Truth. Those err that have departed from her, but the Church is Holy.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. But I have already told you that I do not acknowledge that. I do not acknowledge it because in the Gospels it says: "Ye shall know them by their fruits," know them by their deeds. I have learned that the Church sanctifies oaths, murders, the taking of human life.

FATHER GERASIM. The Church recognizeth and sanctifieth the Powers ordained of God.

(During this conversation STYEPa, LIZANKA, TONYA come in one at a time and all sit or stand, and listen)

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I know that in the Gospels it not only says: "Thou shalt do no murder," but also "Be not angry,"³ but the Church sanctions armies! In the New Testament it says "Swear not at all"; the Church administers oaths! In the New Testament . . .

FATHER GERASIM. Permit me. When Pilate⁴ said, "I adjure thee by the Living God," Christ responded to the oath, replying, "I am he."

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Now, what are you talking about! Why this is ludicrous!

FATHER GERASIM. For this very reason the Church does not sanction every individual interpretation of the Gospel—lest a man should be led astray, but like a mother she careth for her child and giveth him an inter-

³ Matthew, v. 22: "I say unto you that everyone who is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment." The King James Version adds "without cause!" The spirit of the Gospels may condemn anger, but there is no text corresponding to Nikolai Ivanovitch's *Ne gnyevaissa*, "Be not angry." The anger of the Lord is frequently mentioned and the so-called Northern Jesus was not free from its manifestations. The Last Day is called "The Day of Wrath." Indeed one can prove anything from the Hebrew Scriptures!—TR.

⁴ It was not Pilate, but Caiaphas the High Priest, Matt. xxvi. 63. See p. 400, note.

pretation apportioned to his strength . . . No, permit me to finish what I am saying! The Church doth not impose on her children burdens too heavy to be borne; she only demandeth fulfilment of the Commandments: Love, do not kill, do not steal, do not commit adultery.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. That's just it! Do not kill me, do not steal from me what I stole! We have all robbed the people, stolen the land from them and then passed a law—a law against theft! And the Church sanctions all this!

FATHER GERASIM. The allurements, the pride of intellect speaketh through you. You ought to curb your haughty intellect!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Not at all. I demand of you how according to the Law of Christianity I ought to act now that I have recognized my sin in robbing the people and reducing them to slavery by means of the land. How to act? Continue to control the land, profiting by the labors of the starving, compelling them to do such things as this? (*He points to the Lackey who had brought in the luncheon and the wine.*) Or give back the land to those from whom my ancestors stole it?

FATHER GERASIM. You must act as befitteth a Son of the Church. You have a family, you have children. You must keep them and educate them in a manner befitting their station.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Why so?

FATHER GERASIM. Because God hath placed you in such a position. And if you wish to be a benefactor, then be a benefactor by giving away a part of your property and by visiting the poor.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Well, but how is it that the rich young man was told that it is impossible for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven?

FATHER GERASIM. It saith: "If thou wouldst be perfect."

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Yes, but I wish to be perfect. In the Gospel, "Be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect."

FATHER GERASIM. It is also necessary to understand in what context anything is said.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Indeed I am trying to understand, and all that is said in the Sermon on the Mount is simple and plain.

FATHER GERASIM. Pride of intellect!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Yes, but how can you call it pride when it is said that what is hidden from the wise is revealed unto babes?

FATHER GERASIM. Revealed to the meek but not to the proud.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Yes, but who are the proud? Am I—who consider myself as just the same kind of man as everyone else and who therefore must needs live like all the rest by my own labor, in the same poverty as my brothers—or are those that count themselves as set apart, as sacred people, knowing the whole Truth, incapable of error and interpreting the words of Christ in their own way?

FATHER GERASIM (*Becoming offended*). Pardon me, Nikolai Ivanovitch, I did not come to dispute with you as to who is right or to listen to a sermon but I came at the request of Aleksandra Ivanovna to have a little talk with you. You know the whole thing better than I do and therefore I had better cut the conversation short. Only for the last time I beg of you in the name of God: change your way of thinking! You are cruelly deceiving yourself and going to destruction. (*Rises.*)

MARYA IVANOVNA. Wouldn't you like a bit of luncheon?

FATHER GERASIM. No, thank you.

(*Exit with ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA.*)

SCENE XIII

The Same, without ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA and FATHER GERASIM

MARYA IVANOVNA (*To the PRIEST [VASILI NIKANOROVITCH]*). Well, what is the outcome of this?

PRIEST. Why, in my opinion what Nikolai Ivanovitch said was right and Father Gerasim brought no valid arguments at all.

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PRINCESS. He was not allowed to speak and what is more, it was disagreeable to him to be drawn into a sort of public debate. Everybody was listening. His modesty caused him to retire from it.

BORIS. Anything but modesty, and all he said was so false! It was perfectly evident he had nothing to say!

PRINCESS. There! I see how with your customary fickleness you are beginning to take sides with Nikolai Ivanovitch in everything. If those are your ideas, then you ought not to get married.

BORIS. I only say: What is truth is truth and I can not help saying so.

PRINCESS. It is not for you of all men to say this.

BORIS. Why not?

PRINCESS. Because you are poor and have nothing to give away. However, this is not our affair at all.

(Exit followed by all the others except NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH and MARYA IVANOVNA.)

SCENE XIV

NIKOLAI IVÁNOVITCH and MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*Sits, thinking, then smiles at his thoughts*). Masha! Why was this? What made you call in that poor deluded man? Why should that loud-voiced woman and that priest pry into our most intimate affairs? Why can't you and I manage our own lives?

MARYA IVANOVA. Yes, but what am I to do if you insist upon leaving the children penniless? I can't endure it calmly. You know I am not penurious and that I want nothing for myself.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I know, I know and I believe it. But the misfortune is in this—that you do not have faith in the Truth; of course, I know that you see it, but you can not make up your mind to put your trust in it; you have faith neither in the Truth nor in me. But you do trust that gang—the Princess and the rest of them!

MARYA IVANOVNA. I do trust in you, I always have trusted in you, but when you propose to make beggars of the children . . .

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. That very remark shows that you do not trust me. You think I have not had my struggles, my fears! But afterwards I became convinced that this plan is not only feasible but also mandatory, that it is the one thing necessary and advantageous for the children. You have always said that if it were not for the children you would go with me, but I say: If it were not for the children we might live as we are living; we should only ruin ourselves, but we are ruining them!

MARYA IVANOVNA. Now what am I to do, since I do not understand?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. And what am I to do? It is plain enough to me why you sent for that wretched man bedizened with cassock and cross, and why Alina brought in the lawyer! You want me to convey the estate over to you! I can not! Now you know that I have loved you during the twenty years of our life together. I still love you and wish you all good and for that very reason I can not sign the conveyance to you. If I conveyed it to any one, it would be to those from whom it was taken—the peasants. But I can not let it go as it is, I must give it to them. And I am glad the lawyer's here and I must do it.

MARYA IVANOVNA. No! this is dreadful! Why such cruelty? Now, if *you* consider it a sin, then give it to me! (*Weeps.*)

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. You don't know what you are saying. If I should give it to you, I could not go on living with you, I should be obliged to go away. I can not continue to live in such conditions. Even if it is in your name and not any longer in mine, I can not bear to see how the very life-blood is squeezed out of the peasants and how they are put into jail. It's for you to choose!

MARYA IVANOVNA. How cruel you are! What kind of Christianity is this? It is sheer ferocity! Why, I can not live as you want to! I can not rob my own

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children of everything and give it to others. And for this, you want to abandon me. Well, go ahead and do it! I see that you no longer love me and I even see why it is.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Very good then. I will sign the paper. But, Masha, you demand the impossible of me. (*He goes to the table and affixes his signature.*) You have wished this. I can not live this way.

Curtain

ACT THREE

The Act takes place in Moscow. A large Room. In it are a joiner's bench, a table with documents, a cupboard with books, a mirror and picture, all cluttered with boards.

SCENE I

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH and CARPENTER. NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH with an apron on is working at the bench; the MASTER-CARPENTER is using a plane.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*Takes up a board*). Is this well done?

CARPENTER (*Setting the iron*). Not very! Work more freely—this way!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I wish I could work more freely, but I don't get the hang of it at all.

CARPENTER. Yes, but why should your Lordship learn the carpenter's trade? Why, there's so many of us already that we can't hardly make a living!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*Begins working again*). I am ashamed to live an idle life.

CARPENTER. That's your job. God gave you property.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Now it happens that I don't think God gave it to me at all; I had it because some one took it, stole it from his fellow-men!

CARPENTER (*perplexed*). That's so. But still you don't have to do anything like this.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I understand how strange it seems to you that I want to earn my own living in this house where there is so much luxury.

CARPENTER (*Laughs*). Of course not, why should I be? Quality-folks are up to everything.—Here now, use the jack-plane!

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NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. You won't believe me,—you'll laugh—but nevertheless I will tell you that I used to live in that way and was not ashamed of it, but now I have come to put my faith in the Law of Christ—that we are all brethren and I am ashamed to live in that way.

CARPENTER. Ashamed? Then give it up.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I wanted to, but it was no use; I gave it to my wife.

CARPENTER. Well, you couldn't—you're used to it.

A Voice outside the door. Papa, may I come in?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. You're welcome, you always are.

SCENE II

The Same, and LYÚBA

LYUBA (*Enters*). How are you, Yakof?

CARPENTER. I hope you're well, Baruishnya.

LYUBA. Boris has gone off to his regiment. I am afraid he will do something, say something there! What do you think?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. What is there for me to think? He will do what is in him to do.

LYUBA. Why it is dreadful? His time of service will be so short and in one moment he may spoil everything for himself!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. He did well in not coming to me; he knows that I couldn't say anything different from what he himself knows. He himself told me that he had renounced the army because he realized that there is no occupation more lawless, cruel, beastly, than this which is wholly devoted to murder, and moreover that there is nothing more vile and degrading—to subject oneself absolutely in everything to any person who happens to be higher in rank: he knows all this.

LYUBA. That's the very thing I'm afraid of—because he knows this and will be certain to do something rash.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. This will be decided for him by his conscience—the God that is within him. If he had come to me I should have advised just one thing: to do nothing merely by the aid of reason but to act

only when his whole being makes the demand. Otherwise the result is the worst possible. For example I wanted to do as Christ commands: to leave father, wife, children and follow Him and I actually left home. And how did it end? It ended by my coming back and here I am living with you here in the city—in luxury! Because I wanted to do what was beyond my powers, here I am in this humiliating, ridiculous situation. I want to live simply and to work, but in these circumstances with lackeys and butlers, it seems like pure affectation. Here at this moment I see Yakof Nikanorovitch laughing at me . . .

CARPENTER. What is there for me to laugh at? You pay me wages and furnish me tea. I thank you.

LYUBA. I wonder if I ought not to go to him.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Golubushka! my darling! I know how hard it is for you, how terrible, and yet it ought not to be terrible. You see I am a man who has had experience of life. There can be no evil. All that seems evil only fills the heart with joy. Now realize just this one thing—that any person who follows this path is confronted with an alternative. There are even situations when the scales of God and of the Devil balance evenly and seesaw. Just here the mightiest work of God is accomplished. And just here, too, any outside interference is terribly dangerous and injurious. One might say it was like a man's making a tremendous effort to pull a heavy load when the addition of a finger's touch might break his back.

LYUBA. But why should we suffer so?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. It is just the same as if a mother should say: Why must I suffer? Birth is not accomplished without pangs. It is precisely the same in the life of the soul. I will say one thing to you: Boris is a true Christian and consequently free. And if you can not be as yet what he is, that is, can not believe in God as he does, through him believe in Him, believe in God.

MARYA IVANOVITCH (*Outside the door*). May I come in?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. You're always welcome. I seem to be holding a regular reception to-day!

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SCENE III

The Same, and MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA

MÁRYA IVANOVNA. Our priest has arrived, our Vasili Nikanorovitch. He is on his way to the Bishop; he has resigned his parish.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. You don't say!

MÁRYA IVANOVNA. He is here; Lyuba, bring him in . . . He wants to see you. *(Exit LYUBA).*

SCENE IV

The Same, without LYÚBA

MÁRYA IVANOVNA. I came also to talk with you about Vanya. He is acting outrageously and neglecting his studies so that he will certainly fail of promotion. I tried to speak to him—he was rude.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Now Masha, you know that I have no sympathy whatever with this kind of life you are leading or the education you are giving them. It is a terrible question for me whether it is right for me to see them going to destruction before my very eyes . . .

MÁRYA IVANOVNA. Then something else, something definite must be substituted: now what do you offer?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I can not tell what. I will say just one thing: First of all give up this debauching luxury.

MÁRYA IVANOVNA. So that they may become muzhiks? I can not agree to that.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Well then don't ask me. What troubles you is the outcome of it all.

(Enter PRIEST and LYUBA.)

SCENE V

The Same, PRIEST and LYÚBA. The PRIEST and NIKOLAI IVÁNOVITCH kiss each other

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Have you really finished with it?

PRIEST. I can not endure it longer.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I did not expect it quite so soon.

PRIEST. Why, it became unendurable. In our vocation one can not be unconcerned. One has to listen to confessions, to administer the Communion . . . but when one is convinced that it is not true . . .

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. But what are you going to do now?

PRIEST. Now I am on my way to the Bishop for trial. I am afraid I shall be exiled to the Solovyetsky Monastery. I did think at one moment of escaping abroad, of asking your aid; then I reconsidered; 'twould be cowardice—one thing prevents—my wife!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Where is she?

PRIEST. Gone to her father's. My mother-in-law came and took away our little son. That hurt! I should very much like . . . (*Hesitates, keeps back his tears.*)

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Well, God help you. Tell me, have you been staying with us?

SCENE VI

The Same, and the PRINCESS

PRINCESS. (*Comes hurriedly into the room*). What we expected has happened now! He has refused service and is under arrest. I have just been there; they won't let me see him. Nikolai Ivanovitch, do go to him!

LYUBA. Refused service? How did you hear?

PRINCESS. I was there myself. Vasili Andreyevitch told me. He is a Member of the Court-Martial.—He walked right in and declared that he was not going to serve, that he would not take the oath—just everything that Nikolai Ivanovitch has taught him.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Princess! Can one teach such things?

PRINCESS. I don't know anything about it, only this is

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not Christianity. Can this be Christianity? Now you might tell, Father!

PRIEST. I can no longer be called so.

PRINCESS. Well, it's all the same. So you're taking sides with him! You think it all right! No, I will not let things be so! And what kind of a cursed Christianity is this which torments and ruins men! I hate this Christianity of yours. It's all right for you for you know you won't be touched. But he's my only son and you have ruined him.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Now calm yourself, Princess!

PRINCESS. You, you have ruined him. You have ruined him, *you!* Oh, do save him! Go and talk to him and make him give up these absurd notions. Rich people can have them but we can't.

LYUBA (*Weeps*). Papa, what can be done?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I will go. May be I can be of some assistance. (*Takes off his apron.*)

PRINCESS (*Helps him on with his coat*). They would not let me in but if you go with me, I shall win now.

(*Exeunt.*)

Curtain

THE SCENE CHANGES

SCENE I

A Government Bureau. A single CLERK seated and a SENTRY pacing before the door facing the spectator. Enter GENERAL and Aid. The CLERK springs to his feet; the soldier salutes.

GENERAL. Where is the Colonel?

CLERK. He has gone to see the recruit, your Excellency.

GENERAL. Ah, correct. Ask him to come to me.

CLERK. I will do so, your Excellency.

GENERAL. But what's that you are copying? Isn't it the evidence in the recruit's case?

CLERK. It is indeed.

GENERAL. Give it to me.

(CLERK gives document and exit.)

SCENE II

The Same, without CLERK

GENERAL (*Hands document to his AID*). Read it, please.

AID (*Reads*). "I am giving my answers to the questions asked of me: 1. Why do I refuse to take the oath? 2. Why do I refuse to fulfill the demands of the Government? and 3. What led me to use language offensive not only to the Military Profession but also to the Highest Authorities. To the first question: I refuse to take the oath because I profess the teachings of Christ. In his teachings it is plainly and definitely forbidden to take an oath, for example in the Gospel of Matthew, v. 33-37, as well as in the Epistle of James, v. 12."

GENERAL. So they argue, do they, interpret in their own way!

AID (*Proceeds with the reading*). "In the Gospels it says, 'Swear not at all . . . But let your speech be, Yea, yea, nay, nay, and whatsoever is more than these is of the Evil One.' In the Epistle of James: 'But above all things, my brethren, swear neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath; but let your yea be yea and your nay nay; that ye fall not under judgment.' But above and beyond the Gospel's containing such an explicit prohibition of swearing, even if it were not there, it would be impossible for me to bind myself by an oath to fulfill the will of men, since in accordance with the Law of Christ I am under obligations always to fulfill the will of God which may not accord with the will of men."

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GENERAL. So they argue! If my voice were heard, there would be an end to this sort of thing.

AID (*Reads*). "I certainly refuse to fulfill the demands of men who call themselves the Government, because . . ."

GENERAL. What impudence!

AID. . . . "because these demands are criminal, wicked. It is demanded of me that I enter the army to be drilled and prepared to commit murder although this is forbidden by both the Old and the New Testament and above all by my conscience. To the third question . . .

(*Enter COLONEL and CLERK. The two Officers shake hands.*)

(*Exit.*)

SCENE III

The Same, COLONEL and CLERK

COLONEL. Are you reading the evidence?

GENERAL. Yes. Unpardonable impudent language!—Well, go on!

AID. "To the third question: as to what induced me to use offensive language in the presence of the Court,—I reply that I was driven to do so by my desire to serve God and to expose the deception which is being committed in His name. I hope to cherish this desire to the day of my death. And so . . ."

GENERAL. Well, that'll do! One can't listen to all that rubbish! Our business now is to eradicate this kind of thing and so thoroughly that it will not corrupt other men. (*To the COLONEL.*) Have you talked with him?

COLONEL. I talked with him a long time. I tried to lecture him, to convince him that it would only be worse for him, that it would gain nothing by it. I talked about his family. He was very much excited but still stuck to his opinions.

GENERAL. You talked too much. We are in the Army not to argue but to obey.—Bring him here.

(*Exeunt AID and CLERK.*)

SCENE IV

GENERAL AND COLONEL

GENERAL (*Sits down*). Oh no, Colonel, it's no use. One can't manage such fellows so. You've got to take decisive measures, to cut off the ailing member. "One scabby sheep will spoil the whole flock" In such a case salve won't do. The fact that he's a prince and has a mother and sweetheart doesn't concern us in the least. We have before us a soldier. And we must comply with the will of our Supreme Head.

COLONEL. Only I think that we might bring him to terms more quickly by moral suasion.

GENERAL. Not at all! By firmness, only by firmness. I have dealt with such cases. He must be made to feel that he is a mere cypher, a grain of sand under a wagon-wheel and he can not stop it.

COLONEL. Yes, we can try.

GENERAL (*Begins to get hot*). Try nothing! No trying for me! For forty-four years I have been in the service of my Emperor; I have devoted my life and still am devoting my life to this duty and all at once this contemptible little cub pretends to quote theological texts at me! Let him do that with priests, but with me there is just one thing: he is a soldier or else he's under arrest. That's all there is to it!

(*Enter BORIS conducted by two GUARDS and followed by the AID and the CLERK.*)

SCENE V

The Same, BORIS, two SOLDIERS, AID and CLERK

GENERAL (*Pointing with his finger*). Place him there!

BORIS. No placing for me! I will stand or sit where I please; for your authority over me I do not . . .

GENERAL. Hold your tongue! Recognize my authority? I'll teach you to recognize it!

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BORIS (*Sits on a chair*). How shamefully you behave, shouting such things!

GENERAL. Pick him up and make him stand!

(*The Soldiers lift BORIS up.*)

BORIS. This you can do. You can even murder me but to make me obey you . . .

GENERAL. I told you to hold your tongue. Listen to what I am going to say to you.

BORIS. I have no desire at all to hear what *you*, *you*¹ are going to say.

GENERAL. Why, he is a madman! He must go to the hospital for observation. There's nothing else to do.

COLONEL. Our orders were to question him at the Police Office.

GENERAL. Well, then, send him there. But in uniform.

COLONEL. He refuses.

GENERAL. Put him in irons. (*To BORIS*). Listen to what I have to say to you: It is a matter of no concern to me what befalls you. But for your own sake I give you this advice: Change your mind. You'll rot in prison. And you won't be able to do anything for anyone. Chuck it! Well, you lost your temper and I lost mine. (*Slaps him on the shoulder.*) Go on, take the oath and chuck all this stuff. (*To the AID.*) Where's the Father? (*To BORIS.*) Now how about it! (*BORIS maintains silence.*) Why don't you answer me? Honestly it would be better to do as I say. "You can't break an ax-head with a whip." Keep these notions of yours to yourself, serve out your term! We won't make it hard for you. Well, what do you say?

BORIS. It's of no use to say anything more; I have told the whole story.

GENERAL. You have written here that such and such verses are in the Gospels. Now the priests know all about this. You talk with the Father about it and then think it over. Good-bye, I hope it's "Da Svidanya" and

¹The pronoun is italicized in the MS. The young Prince uses the familiar second person, *tui*.

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a chance to congratulate you on being in the Tsar's service.—Send the Father here!

(Exit, followed by the COLONEL and the AID.)

SCENE VI

BORÍS, CLERK *and the Soldiers*

BORIS (*To CLERK and Soldiers*). There, you see how they talk! They know that they are deceiving you. Don't submit to them. Give up your rifles! Go away! Let them flog you in the Disciplinary Battalion: anything is better than to be the servants of these impostors.

CLERK. But how can we get along without the army?

BORIS. That is not for us to consider. We must confess what God wants of us. And God wants us to . . .

A SOLDIER. But what does it mean by "a Christian Army?"

BORIS. There is no such expression. These deceivers invented it.

SOLDIER. At all events the bishops know.

(Enter POLICE OFFICER and CLERK.)

SCENE VII

The Same, POLICE OFFICER and CLERK

POLICE OFFICER (*To CLERK*). Is Prince Cheremshanof, the recruit, under guard here?

CLERK. He is.

POLICE OFFICER. Please come here. Are you Prince Boris Semyonovitch Cheremshanof who has refused to take the oath?

BORIS. I am.

POLICE OFFICER (*Sits down, indicates a seat opposite him*). Please take a seat.

BORIS. I think our conversation will be quite useless.

POLICE OFFICER. I don't think so. Not useless at least for us. Please take notice. Information has reached me that you refuse military service and the oath and are

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therefore suspected of belonging to the Revolutionary Party. And this is what I am in duty bound to inquire into. If it is true, then we shall be compelled to withdraw you from the military service and either imprison you or banish you according to the part you have taken in the Revolution. If it is not true then we shall leave you to the military authorities. Be kind enough to notice that I am speaking to you with perfect frankness and I hope that you will treat us with equal confidence.

BORIS. I can not trust men who, in the first place, are dressed in such clothes; in the second place, your very occupation is such that I not only do not respect it but feel the deepest disgust for it. Nevertheless I will not refuse to answer your questions. What do you wish to know?

POLICE OFFICER. First, if you please, your name, rank, religion.

BORIS. That you already know and I shall not answer. Only one of the questions is very important to me: I am *not* what is called Orthodox.

POLICE OFFICER. What is your religion?

BORIS. I never give it a name.

POLICE OFFICER. But still . . .

BORIS. Well the Christian Religion, according to the Sermon on the Mount.

POLICE OFFICER. Take it down. (*The CLERK writes. To BORIS.*) But still you recognize that you belong to some State, to some social body.

BORIS. No, I do not. I call myself merely a man, a servant of God.

POLICE OFFICER. Why don't you acknowledge yourself to be a member of the Russian Empire?

BORIS. Because I recognize no empires.

POLICE OFFICER. What do you mean, "don't recognize?" Do you wish their overthrow?

BORIS. Unquestionably. I wish that and am working for it.

POLICE OFFICER (*To the CLERK*). Take it down. (*To BORIS.*) By what methods are you working for this?

BORIS. By exposing deception, falsehoods, by disseminating the Truth. For instance, just as you came in, I

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was telling these soldiers that they ought not to believe in the fraud into which they have been misled.

POLICE OFFICER. Now, besides these methods of exposing and persuading, do you approve of any others?

BORIS. No. I not only do not approve of them but I consider all violence as the greatest sin. Not merely violence but also deception and craftiness . . .

POLICE OFFICER. Write it down—Very good. Now be kind enough to inform me about your acquaintances. Are you acquainted with Ivashenkof?

BORIS. No.

POLICE OFFICER. With Klein?

BORIS. I have heard of him, but I never saw him.

(Enter PRIEST, a little old man with a cross and Testament. The CLERK goes up to him for his blessing.)

SCENE VIII

The Same, and PRIEST

POLICE OFFICER. Now I think I may stop. I do not consider you as dangerous or as subject to our jurisdiction. I hope for your speedy release. My respects to you. *(Presses BORIS's hand.)*

BORIS. One thing I should like to say to you. Pardon me but I really must say it: Why have you chosen this shameful, wicked business? I should advise you to give it up.

POLICE OFFICER *(Smiling)*. I thank you for your advice. I have my reasons for it. My respects to you. Batyushka, I yield my place to you.

(Exit with his CLERK.)

SCENE IX

The Same, without POLICE OFFICER and CLERK

PRIEST. And how can you so vex the authorities by your unwillingness to fulfill the duties of a Christian in serving the Tsar and the Fatherland?

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BORIS (*Smiling*). I merely wish to fulfill the duties of a Christian; and for that very reason I do not wish to be a soldier.

PRIEST. Why not? It is said, "To lay down one's life for one's friends" is to be a true Christian . . .

BORIS. Yes, to lay down one's life but not to take the life of another. That is the very thing I wish to do—to lay down my life.

PRIEST. You do not reason correctly, young man. Now John the Baptist said to the soldiers . . .

BORIS (*Smiling*). This only goes to prove that even then soldiers used to commit robberies and he forbade them.

PRIEST. Well, but why do you refuse to take the oath?

BORIS. You know that it is forbidden in the Gospels.

PRIEST. Not at all. How was it when Pilate said, "I adjure thee by the living God . . . art thou the Christ?"² The Lord Jesus Christ replied "I am he." That proves an oath is not forbidden.

BORIS. Aren't you ashamed of yourself? You, an old man . . .

PRIEST. I advise you, do not be stubborn. We can not make the world over. Come now, take the oath and all will be easy. And leave it to the Church to determine what is sin and what is not sin.

BORIS. To you? Are you not afraid to take upon yourself so much sin?

PRIEST. What kind of sin? As I was brought up in the firm faith and as I have lived for thirty years in the priestly calling there can be no sin in my case.

BORIS. Whose sin is it then in your deceiving so many? See what such men as he have in their heads! (*Points to a sentinel.*)

PRIEST. You and I, young man, will not decide this. It becomes us to obey our superiors.

BORIS. Leave me! I am sorry for you and, I confess, it is disgusting for me to listen to you. If you were like that general—but here you come with a cross, with the

² Did Count Tolstoï wish to throw ridicule on the Batyushka by causing him to confuse the High Priest Caiaphas with Pilate? See Matthew xxvi. 63.

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Gospels, in the name of Christ to persuade me to reject Christ! Go away! (*In great agitation.*) Go away, leave me! Go away! Take me where I shall not see anyone. I am tired, horribly tired.

PRIEST. Good-bye, if that is so. (*Enter AID.*)

SCENE X

The Same, and AID. BORIS sits down in rear of the room

AID. Well, and what about it?

PRIEST. Great stubbornness, insubordination.

AID. So then he refuses to take the oath and serve?

PRIEST. Absolutely.

AID. Then he must go to the hospital.

PRIEST. What! on the ground that he is ill? That of course is more advisable. Otherwise his example might be infectious.

AID. For observation in the ward for the mentally afflicted. Those are my orders.

PRIEST. Certainly. My respects to you! (*Exit.*)

SCENE XI

The Same, without the PRIEST

AID. (*Approaches BORIS.*) If you please. I am ordered to conduct you . . .

BORIS. Where?

AID. For the time being to the hospital where you will find it quieter and where you will have a chance to think things over . . .

BORIS. I have thought them over long ago. Well, all right, let us go. (*Exeunt.*)

Curtain

THE SCENE CHANGES

(*Receiving-room in the Hospital. SENIOR and JUNIOR DOCTOR and a Patient, an OFFICER in a dressing-gown. GUARDS in blouses.*)

SCENE I

SICK OFFICER. I tell you—you are worse than destroying me. Several times already I have felt perfectly well.

SENIOR DOCTOR. Now don't get excited. I am ready to give you a discharge, but you yourself know perfectly well that freedom is dangerous for you. If I knew that you would be looked after!

PATIENT. You think that I will begin to drink again! No, I am quite cured. But every day now that I am kept here is killing me. You are doing exactly the opposite (*Grows excited*) of what should be done. You are cruel. It's all right for you!

SENIOR DOCTOR. Calm yourself. (*Makes a signal to the GUARDS. They station themselves behind the PATIENT.*)

PATIENT. It's all right for you to reason, being free, but how is it with us kept in with crazy men? (*To the GUARDS.*) What are you up to? Get away!

SENIOR DOCTOR. I beg you, calm yourself!

PATIENT. I beg you and demand of you that you let me go. (*Yells and struggles while the GUARDS seize him. After a scuffle he is dragged out.*)

SCENE II

SENIOR AND JUNIOR DOCTOR

JUNIOR DOCTOR. There, the same old story! And he almost got you this time!

SENIOR DOCTOR. Alcoholism, and . . . Nothing really can be done. Still there's some improvement.
(*Enter AID.*)

SCENE III

The Same and AID

AID. How are you?

SENIOR DOCTOR. Good morning!

AID. Now I've brought you an interesting case. A certain Prince Cheremshanof under orders to take up his military service has refused on Scriptural grounds. He was referred to the gendarmes but nothing politically objectionable was detected in his case. A Batyushka tried to bring him to reason; also without success.

SENIOR DOCTOR (*Laughing*). And so you bring him to us as last resort! All right, fetch him in.

(*Exit JUNIOR DOCTOR.*)

SCENE IV

The Same, without JUNIOR DOCTOR

AID. It is said he is a very cultivated young man. And he has a rich sweetheart. Extraordinary! I am convinced the right place for him is under your care.

SENIOR DOCTOR. Yes, mania . . .

(*BORIS is brought in.*)

SCENE V

The Same, and BORIS

SENIOR DOCTOR. Welcome! Take a seat, please. We will have a little talk. (*To AID.*) You may leave us.

(*Exit AID.*)

The Same, without AID

BORIS. If I may I would ask you, supposing I am to be locked up, to lock me up as soon as possible and let me have some rest.

SENIOR DOCTOR. Excuse me, but we must observe the regulations: only a few questions. How do you feel? What are you suffering from?

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BORIS. Nothing. I am perfectly well.

SENIOR DOCTOR. Yes, but you do not behave like other men.

BORIS. I behave as my conscience dictates.

SENIOR DOCTOR. Here you have refused to fulfill your military duties. What motives have you for such conduct?

BORIS. I am a Christian and consequently can not commit murder.

SENIOR DOCTOR. But don't you see it is necessary to protect the Fatherland from her enemies, to keep evil-doers from destroying the social order?

BORIS. But no one is attacking her. Subverters of the social order are far more frequently found among these that govern than among those whom the Government maltreats.

SENIOR DOCTOR. So? What do you mean by that?

BORIS. Well, for example the chief cause of evil is vodka—sold by the Government. A false, deceitful religion is propagated by the Government and here this soldiering-business, in which I am required to take part and which is a chief source of corruption, is demanded by the Government.

SENIOR DOCTOR. In your opinion, then, the Government and the Empire are unnecessary.

BORIS. That I do not know, but I do know without question that it is my duty not to take part in evil.

SENIOR DOCTOR. But what will happen to the world? You see our reason is given to us that we may be on our guard.

BORIS. Our reason is given to us also to see that the public welfare may be preserved not by violence but by goodness and that the refusal of any man to take part in evil can have no dangerous consequences.

SENIOR DOCTOR. Now allow us to make a slight examination. I will trouble you to lie down. (*Begins to manipulate him.*) Do you feel any pain here?

BORIS. No.

SENIOR DOCTOR. Or here?

BORIS. No.

SENIOR DOCTOR. Draw a deep breath. Now stop

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breathing. I thank you. Now be good enough to shut your eyes and walk.

BORIS. Aren't you ashamed to do all this?

SENIOR DOCTOR. What, for instance?

BORIS. All these stupid things. Why, you know that I am healthy and that they brought me here because I refused to take part in their wickedness, that they have no answer whatever to the Truth and so they pretend to consider me abnormal—and you are coöperating with them. Now this is vile and shameful. End it!

SENIOR DOCTOR. So then you object to taking a few steps?

BORIS. I certainly do. You may torture me as much as you will, but you have got to do it; I will not help in it. (*Hotly.*) Leave me!

(SENIOR DOCTOR *presses the bell-button.* *Enter two GUARDS*

SCENE VII

The Same, and GUARDS

SENIOR DOCTOR. Just calm yourself. I realize that your nerves are on edge. Wouldn't you like to go to your quarters?

(*Enter JUNIOR DOCTOR.*)

SCENE VIII

The Same, and JUNIOR DOCTOR

JUNIOR DOCTOR. Visitors to see Cheremshanof.

BORIS. Who may they be?

JUNIOR DOCTOR. Saruintsof and his daughter.

BORIS. I should like to see them.

SENIOR DOCTOR. Why not? Ask them in. You may receive them here.

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(*Exit, followed by JUNIOR DOCTOR and GUARDS. Enter NIKOLAI IVÁNOVITCH and LYÚBA. The PRINCESS looks in at the door and says: "Go in; I'll join you later."*)

SCENE IX

BORÍS, NIKOLAI IVÁNOVITCH and LYÚBA

LYUBA (*Goes straight up to him, clasps his head and kisses him*). Poor Boris!

BORIS. No, don't pity me. I feel so contented, so glad, so light-hearted—Greetings! (*He and NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH kiss each other.*)

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I have come to say just one thing, a very important thing: First, that in such an affair as this it is worse to go to extremes than it is to fail of accomplishment; Secondly that in this matter one must act as it says in the Gospels; not to take thought beforehand—"I will do so and so, I will say such a thing." And when they deliver you up to the magistrates, take no thought what you will say; the Spirit of God will speak for you. That is, not to act because you have decided that you ought to do so but because you feel in your whole being that you can not act otherwise.

BORIS. That is just what I have done. I did not say to myself "I will not serve." But when I saw all this falsehood, these zertsála,³—documents—Police-officers, officials smoking, I could not refrain from saying what I said. And it was faint-hearted at first but after I once got started, it all seemed so plain, so delightful.

(*LYUBA sits down and weeps*)

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Above all, do nothing for notoriety's sake, or to get praise from those whose opinions you prize. I will only say on my own account that even if at this moment you should take the oath, should enter the service, my love and respect for you would be no less

³ Slavonic word: Mirrors of justice.

—more than ever, because what counts is not one's conduct in the world but one's spiritual condition.

BORIS. That is so, because if anything takes place in the soul the world must change accordingly.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Now I have spoken my mind to you. Your Mother is here. She is terribly cut up. If you can do what she asks of you, do it: this is what I wanted to tell you.

(Crazy shrieks are heard in the corridor. A PATIENT dashes in pursued by GUARDS, who drag him out again.)

LYUBA. It is horrible! And you have to stay here! *(Weeps.)*

BORIS. It is not horrible to me; nothing is horrible any longer. I feel so contented. Only one thing troubles me—your reaction to it. Now help me! I am certain you will help me.

LYUBA. Can I feel glad of it?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Not glad, that is impossible; I am not glad I suffer on his account and how willingly I would take his place, but though I suffer I know that it is well.

LYUBA. Well?—But when will they set him free?

BORIS. No one knows. I don't think about the future. The present is so good! And you can make it even better. *(Enter PRINCESS.)*

SCENE X

The Same, and PRINCESS

PRINCESS. I can not wait another moment! *(To NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH)*. Tell me, have you persuaded him? Does he consent—Borya! Golubchik! Oh just realize what I am suffering! Thirty years of my life for you? just for you! Seen you grow—rejoiced in you! And when the work is ready and complete, suddenly this rejection of it all! Prison! Disgrace! . . . No, no! . . . Borya! . . .

BORIS. Mama! Just listen!

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PRINCESS. Why do you others say nothing?—You have destroyed him; it is your duty to persuade him. For you it is all right. Lyuba, speak to him!

LYUBA. What can I say?

BORIS. Mama! you must realize that there are things which are impossible, as impossible as flying: I can not serve!

PRINCESS. You have persuaded yourself that you can not! Rubbish! All men have served and are serving now. You and Nikolai Ivanovitch have invented a new kind of Christianity. It is not Christianity but the Devil's doctrine and it makes us all suffer.

BORIS. But it says so in the Gospels!

PRINCESS. It says nothing of the sort but if it did say so, then it says stupid things! Golubchik! Borya! listen to me! (*She flings her arms around his neck and bursts into tears.*) All my life has been one long sorrow. The only gleam of joy—and you turn it all into torture! Borya! Have pity on me!

BORIS. Mama! This is horribly hard for me. But I can not say what you want me to.

PRINCESS. Now do not refuse! Tell me that you will serve!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Tell her that you will think it over and then think it over.

BORIS. Very well, then. But Mama, you might have some pity on me! It is hard for me too! (*Shrieks are heard again in the corridor.*) You see I am in a Mad House and I too might lose my mind.

SCENE XI

The Same, and SENIOR DOCTOR

SENIOR DOCTOR (*Entering*). Madam! This may have very serious consequences. Your son is in an excited state of mind. I think it is essential to cut the interview short. Our visiting-days are Thursdays and Sundays—I will ask you to come, if you will, before twelve o'clock.

PRINCESS. Very well, very well, then I will go. Borya,

good-bye! Think it over, have pity on me and on Thursday make me happy, when you see me. (*Kisses him.*)

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*Shakes hands with him*). Think it over with the help of God—as if you knew you were to die to-morrow. Only so will you decide right. Good-bye!

BORIS (*Goes up to LYUBA*). What do you say to me?

LYUBA. I can not tell a lie. I fail to understand why you are tormenting yourself and all the rest of us. I do not understand it and I have nothing to say. (*Bursts into tears and goes out, followed by all except BORIS.*)

SCENE XII

BORIS *alone*

BORIS. Akh! how hard! Akh, how hard it is! Lord help me! (*Prays.—Enter GUARDS bringing a dressing-gown.*)

SCENE XIII

GUARD. Please put this on. (BORIS *puts on the khalat.*)

Curtain

ACT FOUR

In Moscow. A year has elapsed since the Third Act. A Drawing-room in the mansion of the SARUINTSOFS is all ready for an evening dance. LACKEYS are setting flowers in front of the Grand Piano. Enter MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA in a fashionable silk gown. ALEKSANDRA IVÁNOVNA is with her.

SCENE I

MÁRYA IVÁNOVNA, ALEKSANDRA and LACKEYS

MARYA IVANOVNA. Why call it a ball? It's not a ball but simply a *vetcherok*, a little evening party, what we used to call *une sauterie* for adolescents.¹ You see I can't let the young folks go out all the time. The Makofs had some theatricals and they have been everywhere to dances. I simply must return these civilities.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. I'm afraid it's very disagreeable to Nicolas.

MARYA IVANOVNA. How can I help it? (*To a LACKEY.*) Place it there!—God is my witness that I wouldn't wish to displease him. But I think he is not so exacting as he was.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. O yes he is, only he doesn't show it. He retired to his own room after dinner, very much disturbed.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Well what can be done, what can be done? You see we've got to live. Here we have seven children and if they don't enjoy themselves at home God knows what they will be up to. At all events I am perfectly happy about Lyuba . . .

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Why, has he made a formal proposal?

¹ A young folks' hop.

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MARYA IVANOVNA. Practically. He has talked with her and she said Yes.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. That will be another terrible blow to him.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Yes, he knows. He can't help knowing.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. He doesn't like him.

MARYA IVANOVNA (*To the LACKEYS*). Put the fruit on the sideboard!—Like whom? Aleksandr Mikhailovitch? Of course he doesn't, because he is the antithesis of all his theories: he is nice, pleasant, good fellow, a man of the world. Akh, this terrible cauchemar—Boris Cheremshanof! What about him?

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Lizanka has been to see him. He is still there. They say he's grown awfully thin and the doctors fear for his life or his reason.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Yes, his ideas have brought about this frightful sacrifice. Why should he have been ruined? I never wanted . . .

(*Enter PIANIST.*)

SCENE II

The Same, and PIANIST

MARYA IVANOVNA (*To PIANIST*). You are to play for the dancing?

PIANIST. Yes, I am the Pianist.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Please take a seat and wait. Or won't you have some tea?

PIANIST. No, I thank you. (*Goes to the piano.*)

MARYA IVANOVNA. No, I never wanted it. I liked Boris but still he was no match for Lyuba. Especially after he was carried away by Nikolai Ivanovitch's notions.

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. Still the strength of his conviction is amazing! Just think how he has suffered! He has been told that if he does not yield he will be kept there or put into prison. And Lizanka told how joyous, even gay he is.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Fanatics! But here is Aleksandr Mikhailovitch.

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(Enter ALEKSANDR MIKHAÏLOVITCH STARKOVSKY *re-splendent in evening dress.*)

SCENE III

The Same, and STARKOVSKY

STARKOVSKY. I am early. (*Kisses the Ladies' hands.*)

MARYA IVANOVNA. So much the better!

STARKOVSKY. And Lyubov Nikolayevna? She told me she meant to dance as much as possible to make up for lost time. I agreed to help her!

MARYA IVANOVNA. She is making out the cotillon.

STARKOVSKY. I will go and help her, may I?

MARYA IVANOVNA. Admirable!

(STARKOVSKY *on the way out meets LYUBA who is carrying a cushion, stars and ribbons.*)

SCENE IV

The Same, and LYUBA

LYUBA (*In evening frock not décolleté*). Ah here you are. How jolly! You can help me. There in the reception-room are two more cushions: bring them both here. Blessings on you!

STARKOVSKY. I fly!

(*Exit.*)

SCENE V

MARYA IVANOVNA, ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA *and* LYUBA

MARYA IVANOVNA (*To LYUBA*). Listen, Lyuba! Acquaintances will be here this evening; they will be hinting—asking questions. May I make the announcement?

LYUBA. No, mama, no. Why should you? Let them ask. Papa wouldn't like it.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Well, he knows or suspects; sooner or later we shall have to tell him. I think it is better to

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make the announcement this evening. You see, c'est le secret de la comédie.

LYUBA. No, no, mama, please not. It would spoil our whole evening. No, it is best not.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Well, just as you wish.

(*Enter STARKOVSKY.*)

SCENE VI

The Same, and STARKOVSKY

LYUBA. This is the way to do it: toward the end of the evening, just before supper. (*To STARKOVSKY*) Did you find them?

MARYA IVANOVNA. Well, I will go and look for Natasha. (*Exit with ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA.*)

SCENE VII

LYUBA and STARKOVSKY

STARKOVSKY (*brings three cushions, steadying them with his chin and dropping things*). Lyubov Nikolayevna, don't bother with them, I'll pick them up. Well, you have made a lot! All that's needed now is to arrange them. Vanya, come in!

SCENE VIII

The Same, and VANYA

VANYA (*Bringing still more*). This is the last of them. Lyuba, Aleksandr Mikhailovitch and I have laid a wager: who will get the most favors.

STARKOVSKY. Easy for you, for you know everyone; you have got them already in advance while I shall have to win the girls over first and then receive my reward! That means I have to give you forty points to begin with!

VANYA. But then you are engaged, while I am just a boy.

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STARKOVSKY. Well, I'm not engaged as yet and worse off than a boy.

LYUBA. Vanya, please go to my room and bring me the paste and pin-cushion from the little étagère. (*Exit VANYA*)—Only for heaven's sake don't break anything there!

SCENE IX

LYUBA and STARKOVSKY

STARKOVSKY (*Seizes LYUBA's hand*). Lyuba, may I? I am so happy. (*Kisses her hand*) The mazurka is mine, but that's not enough for me. During the mazurka we shan't have time to talk. And I must speak. May I telegraph my people that I am yours and to be congratulated?

LYUBA. Yes, this evening.

STARKOVSKY. One word more: How will Nikolai Ivanovitch take it? Have you spoken to him as yet? Yes?

LYUBA. I have not spoken to him. He will take it as he takes everything now that concerns the family. He will say: "Do as you know best." But in his soul he will be distressed.

STARKOVSKY. Because I am not a Cheremshanof? Because I am a Kammerjunker, a Marshal of the Nobility?

LYUBA. Yes. But I have a struggle with myself, I have deceived myself for his sake. And my not doing as he wants me to do doesn't mean that I love him any the less but that I can not lie. And he himself says this. My desire to live is too strong.

STARKOVSKY. And life is the one great truth. Well, how about Cheremshanof?

LYUBA (*in agitation*). Do not speak of him to me! I want to blame him and I do blame him even while he is suffering. And I know that this is because I am guilty toward him; I know one thing that there is such a thing as love—love—as real love—a love which I never felt toward him.

STARKOVSKY. Lyuba, is that true?

LYUBA. You want me to tell you that I love you with this real love but I will not say so. I—yes, I love you with a different kind of love but it is not that kind; and my love for him is not and my love for you is not.² If only they could be combined!

STARKOVSKY. No, I am satisfied with mine! (*Kisses her hand*) Lyuba!

LYUBA (*Pushes him away*). No, let us sort these trinkets. They are already beginning to arrive.

The PRINCESS enters with TONYA and a YOUNG GIRL

SCENE X

The Same, The PRINCESS with TONYA and YOUNG GIRL

LYUBA. Mama will be here directly.

PRINCESS. Are we the first?

STARKOVSKY. Some one has to be. I have suggested making a gutta-percha lady as the first arrival!

(*Enter STYEPA; also VANYA, who brings the articles*)

SCENE XI

The Same, STYEPA and VANYA

STYEPA. I expected to see you last evening at the Italian Opera.

TONYA. We were at our Aunt's, sewing for the poor.

(*Enter STUDENTS, LADIES, MARYA IVANOVNA, a COUNTESS*)

SCENE XII

The Same, MARYA IVANOVNA, COUNTESS, STUDENTS, LADIES

COUNTESS. Aren't we to see Nikolai Ivanovitch?

² *No eto i nye to. I ta nye to i eta nye to.*

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MARYA IVANOVNA. No, he never joins us.³

STARKOVSKY. Quadrille, please (*Claps his hands. Places are taken; the dancing begins*).

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA (*Passes over to MARYA IVANOVNA*). He is terribly wrought up. He has been to see Boris Semyonovitch and when he came home he noticed the party and is making his preparations to leave home. I went to the door and heard his conversation with Aleksandr Petrovitch.

MARYA IVANOVNA. What!

STARKOVSKY. Rond des dames! Les cavaliers en avant!

ALEKSANDRA IVANOVNA. He has made up his mind that it is impossible to live here and he is going away.

MARYA IVANOVNA. What a torment this man is!

(*Exit*)

Curtain

The Scene changes. NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH'S Room. Music heard in the distance. He is sitting in his overcoat. With him is ALEKSANDR PETROVITCH in tattered clothing.

SCENE I

ALEKSANDR PETROVITCH. Be at ease; we can go to the Caucasus without a copper. And as soon as you are there, you can manage.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. We will ride to Tula and walk from there. Well, all is ready. (*He lays a letter in the middle of the table and turns to go. Meets MARYA IVANOVNA.*)

³ Here follows in the original a scene expunged by the author:

GENERAL. Tell me, what was the outcome of that affair with young Cheremshanof?

MARYA IVANOVNA. Poor fellow, he is still in the Insane Asylum.

COUNTESS. What obstinacy!

CIVILIAN. What an extraordinary delusion! What advantage does it bring to anyone?

SCENE II

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Now, why have you come?

MARYA IVANOVNA. Indeed why! So as to prevent you from doing a cruel thing. What does this mean? What is your reason for it?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. What does it mean? It means that I can not go on living so. I can not endure this horrible depraved life any longer.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Now this is frightful! My life, which I have given entirely to you and the children suddenly becomes "Depraved!" (*Sees ALEKSANDR PETROVITCH*) Renvoyez au moins cet homme. Je ne veux pas qu'il soit témoin de cette conversation.⁴

ALEKSANDR PETROVITCH. Compréné. Toujer mua parté.⁵

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Wait for me yonder, Aleksandr Petrovitch; I will come in a moment.

(*Exit ALEKSANDR PETROVITCH.*)

SCENE III

NIKOLAÏ IVANOVITCH *and* MARYA IVANOVNA

MARYA IVANOVNA. And what can you have in common with such a man as that? And why is he nearer to you than your wife is? It is incomprehensible. Where on earth are you going?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I left a letter for you. I did not want to talk it over. It is too hard for me. But if you wish, I will try to talk calmly with you.

MARYA IVANOVNA. No, I can not understand it. Why do you hate and torment your wife who has given every thing up for you? Can you say that I have been to balls, that I have been extravagant in dress, that I have flirted? My whole life has been devoted to my family.

⁴At any rate send this man away. I don't want him to be a witness to our conversation.

⁵Bad French: Me understand. Always me go off.

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I myself have nursed all my children—have trained them; last year the whole burden of their education, the management of our affairs has come on me . . .

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*Interrupting.*) Yes this whole burden has come on you because you were not willing to live as I proposed.

MARYA IVANOVNA. But can't you see it was impossible! Ask any one. It is impossible to let our children grow up ignoramuses, as you wanted to do or for me to do the cleaning and cooking.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I never wanted you to do that.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Well it makes no difference, it amounted to that. No, you are a Christian, you want to do good, you say you love men, but why do you torture your wife who has given her whole life to you?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. But how do I torture you? Indeed I love you but . . .

MARYA IVANOVNA. Isn't it torture when you cast me off and abandon me? What will everyone say? One of two things: either that I am a bad woman or that you are crazy!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Well, supposing I am crazy: I can not live so.

MARYA IVANOVNA. What is there so very terrible even if once during the whole Winter . . . and only once for the reason that I was afraid that it would be disagreeable to you—I have a little party! and what kind of a party? Ask Masha or Varvara Vasilyevna: they all told me that I must do so, that it was unavoidable. And it is a crime! and for this I must suffer disgrace. Yes, and not merely disgrace! The worst thing about it is that you no longer love me; you love everyone else, even that drunken Aleksandr Petrovitch—while I still love you, and can not live without you. Why is it? Why is it? (*Bursts into tears.*)

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Why you see, you aren't willing to understand my life, my spiritual life.

MARYA IVANOVNA. I do want to understand, but it is beyond my comprehension. I see that your Christianity has made you hate your family and hate me. But why? I can not understand?

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NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Others understand.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Who? Aleksandr Petrovitch who gets money out of you?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Yes, he and others and Tonya and Vasili Nikanorovitch. It is all the same to me. Even if no one understood it wouldn't change matters.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Vasili Nikanorovitch has repented and come back to his parish. And Tonya is now dancing and coquetting with Styepa!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I'm sorry but that does not make black white, it can not change my life. Masha! You don't need me. Let me go! I have tried to take part in your life, to bring into it everything which for me constitutes all of life. But it is impossible. It has resulted only in my torturing you and myself. Not only do I torture myself but I am spoiling what I do. Everyone, even this Aleksandr Petrovitch, has the right to tell me that I am an imposter, that I preach but do not practice, that I advocate Evangelical poverty while I myself am living in luxury while pretending that I have sacrificed everything to my wife.

MARYA IVANOVNA. And you are ashamed before people, are you? Aren't you able to rise above that?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. I'm not ashamed—and yet I am!—but I am spoiling God's work.

MARYA IVANOVNA. You yourself have said that God's work is accomplished notwithstanding our opposition to it. But this is not the issue. Tell me what you require of me.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Why, I have told you.

MARYA IVANOVNA. But Nicolas, now you know that it is out of the question. Only consider: just at this time Lyuba is to be married, Vanya has entered the University, Misha, Katya are at school. How can all this be broken up?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. How then is it to be with me?

MARYA IVANOVNA. Do what you preach: endure, love! What is the difficulty? Only have patience with us; don't shut yourself off from us. Now what is tormenting you?

(Enter VANYA running.)

SCENE IV

The Same, and VANYA

VANYA. Mama, you are wanted.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Tell them I can't come. Go, go away!

VANYA. Please come! *(Exit.)*

SCENE V

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. You don't want to see or to understand my position.

MARYA IVANOVNA. Not that I don't want to, I can not!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. No you don't want to understand and we are drifting farther and farther apart, all the time. Do just enter into my heart, put yourself into my place for a moment and you will understand. Now, first of all: the life here is wholly perverted. You are angry at the word, but I can not call it by any other term since it is a life founded wholly on robbery; because the money on which we live is money from the land and we have robbed the people of that. Then again I see that this life we lead corrupts the children. "Wo unto him who shall offend one of these little ones." But I see how from my point of view they are going to perdition, are demoralized. I can not bear to see grown up men, dressed in livery serving us like slaves. Every meal is a torture to me.

MARYA IVANOVNA. But can't you see this has always been so? Don't you know it is the same with everyone—both abroad and everywhere!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. From the moment when I realized that we are all brothers, I have not been able, I tell you I have not been able to look on these things without suffering.

MARYA IVANOVNA. But why? One can imagine anything.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*Hotly*). This very lack of comprehension is dreadful to me! Just take to-day:—the morning I spend in the Rzhanof Lodgings among the down-and-outers; I see a little child lying dead of starvation; a mere boy beginning the career of a drunkard; a washerwoman sick with consumption going out to do laundry work; then I come home and a lackey in a white cravat opens the door for me; I see my son, a young boy, ordering this lackey to bring him water; I see this army of servants working for us. Then I go to see Boris, a man who is standing up for the Truth at the cost of his life, and I see how they are driving him—a clean, strong, purposeful man, into madness and suicide in order to get rid of him. I know, they know that he has a weak heart and they provoke him and drag him into the ward where they keep madmen. Yes, this is horrible, horrible! And here I come home and learn that my daughter, the one member of our family who understood—not me but the Truth—that she, I say, has simultaneously been false to the man to whom she promised her love and to the Truth and is going to marry a lackey, a liar . . .

MARYA IVANOVNA. What kind of Christianity is this!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. You're right. It is shameful of me. I am wrong but I only want you to put yourself in my place. I only say that she has turned her back on the Truth . . .

MARYA IVANOVNA. You say "from the Truth;" but others and the majority say "From error." You see there is Vasili Nikanorovitch—he came to the conclusion that he was mistaken and now he has returned to the Church.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Now that can not be . . .

MARYA IVANOVNA. He has written Lizanka; she will show you his letter. This sort of thing is very unstable. Take Tonya's case too. I won't say anything about Aleksandr Petrovitch who takes up with it only for his own profit.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*Becomes angry*). Well, let it

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go! I only ask you to understand me. I still consider the Truth the Truth. So it hurts me. And here I come home and see a tree, a ball, a waste of hundreds while people are dying of starvation. I can not live so! Have pity on me! I am tormented to death. Let me go away. Good-bye!

MARYA IVANOVNA. If you go, I shall go with you and if I don't go with you then I will throw myself under the train you go by.—And let them all go to destruction—Misha and Katya. My God! my God! What torture! Why should it be? Why? (*Weeps.*)

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*At the door*). Aleksandr Petrovitch, go home, I am not coming.—Very good, I will stay. (*Takes off his coat.*)

MARYA IVANOVNA (*Throwing her arms around him*). We have not much longer to live: let us not spoil everything after living together twenty-eight years. Well, I won't give any more parties, but don't punish me!

SCENE VI

The Same, VANYA and KATYA

VANYA and KATYA (*come running in*). Mama, come quick!

MARYA IVANOVNA. I'm coming, I'm coming. So let us forgive each other. (*Exit with VANYA and KATYA.*)

SCENE VII

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*Alone*)

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. A child, a perfect child or else a tricky woman. Yes, a tricky child. Yes, that's it.—It seems Thou dost not wish me to be Thy laborer in this work of Thine; Thou requirest that I be humiliated by having all point the finger at me: "He talks but he doesn't do!" Well, so be it! Thou knowest best what Thou requirest: meekness, foolishness. Yes, if only I might attain that degree of exaltation!

(*Enter LIZANKA.*)

SCENE VIII

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH and LIZANKA

LIZANKA. Excuse me. I have brought you a letter from Vasili Nikanorovitch. It is written to me but he asks me to show it to you.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Is that really so?

LIZANKA. Yes; shall I read it to you?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Yes, please.

LIZANKA (*Reads the letter*). "I am writing you and beg you will let Nikolai Ivanovitch see it. I am very sorry for the error through which I openly seceded from the Holy Orthodox Church, and I rejoice that I have come back to it. I hope you and Nikolai Ivanovitch will do the same. I beg you to forgive me."

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Poor fellow! He has been driven by torture to do this! But still it is dreadful!

LIZANKA. I have come to tell you besides that the Princess is here and just came up to my room in a terrible state of mind: she absolutely insists upon seeing you. She has just been to visit her son. I think you had better put her off. What could result from an interview with her?

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. No, bring her in. Evidently, this is to be a day of awful tribulation.

LIZANKA. Then I will call her. (*Exit.*)

SCENE IX

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH (*Alone*)

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Oh, yes, if one could only remember that life consists but in serving Thee!—remember that Thou sendest trial it is because Thou considerest me capable of enduring it, that it is not beyond my strength. Otherwise, it would not even be a trial. Father! help, help to do not my own will but Thine!
(*Enter the PRINCESS.*)

SCENE X

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH *and the* PRINCESS

PRINCESS. You receive me, you are that condescending! My respects to you. I refuse to shake hands with you, because I hate you, I detest you.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Why, what has happened?

PRINCESS. Just this: they are transferring him to the Disciplinary Battalion. And it is your work!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Princess, if you want something, say it, but if you have come merely to rail at me, you will only injure yourself. You can not offend *me* because I sympathize with you from the bottom of my heart and pity you.

PRINCESS. What compassion! what Christian elevation! No, Mister Saruintsof, you can't cheat me. We know you now. You have led my son to destruction; it makes no difference to you and here you are giving balls and my son's fiancée, your daughter—is to be married—has made a match such as pleases you. And you pretend to be leading a simple life and tinker with carpentry! How detestable you are with your new style of Phariseism!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Princess, be calm! Tell me what you want. Certainly you did not come merely to vituperate me!

PRINCESS. Yes, I did too! I must pour out my anguish. But there is something else I want. It's this:—He is being transferred to the Disciplinary Battalion and I will not put up with it. And you did it—You! You! You!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. It's not my doing but God's: And God sees how I pity you. Do not oppose the will of God. He desires to test you. Bear it with patience.

PRINCESS. I can not bear it with patience. My whole life has been centered in my only son and you have taken him from me and ruined him. I can not be calm! I have come to you—my final attempt—to tell you that you have ruined him and you must save him. Go, use your utmost efforts to have him set free. Go to the

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General, to the Tsar, to anyone you please. Only see that you do it. If you fail to do this I know what steps I shall take. You will answer to me for this.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Tell me what I must do. I am ready to do my utmost.

PRINCESS. I repeat: you must save him. If you don't save him, remember! Good-bye! *(Exit.)*

SCENE XI

NIKOLAÏ IVANOVITCH *(Alone)*

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH *(Throws himself on the divan. Silence. The doors are flung open. Music sounds louder. Grossvater-dance.)* *(Enter STYEPA.)*

SCENE XII

NIKOLAÏ IVANOVITCH *and* STYEPA

STYEPA. Papa's not here, come in!
(Enter couples young and old.)

SCENE XIII

NIKOLAÏ IVANOVITCH, STYEPA *and* COUPLES

LYUBA *(Notices her Father)*. Oh, you're here, excuse us!

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH *(Rises)*. Nitchevo! It's all right. *(Couples dance out.)*

SCENE XIV

NIKOLAÏ IVANOVITCH *(Alone)*

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH. Vasili Nikanorovitch has back-slidden. Boris I have ruined. Lyuba is going to be married. Can it be that I am mistaken? Mistaken in my belief in Thee? No! Father help me!

Curtain

ACT FIVE

Editor's Note.—The Fifth Act according to the Con-
spectus preserved in the Author's handwriting was to
be presented in three Scenes. Following is the Synopsis:

SCENE I

*Disciplinary Battalion. A Barracks. Men under arrest
are sitting and lying about. BORIS is reading the New
Testament. He gives his explanation of it.
A Prisoner who has been punished is brought in.
"Akh! Why haven't we a Pugatchóf for you!"¹ The
PRINCESS rushes in; they force her out again. Alter-
cation with an Officer. At Prayers. BORIS in the
dungeon. "We'll flog him."*

The Scene changes

*The Emperor's Cabinet. Cigarettes, jokes, gracious words.
The PRINCESS is announced: "Let her wait." Enter
Petitioners; flatteries are uttered. Then the PRINCESS.
Refusal. Exeunt.*

The Scene changes

*MARYA IVANOVNA is talking with the DOCTOR about her
husband's illness. "He has altered, is gentle but has
been in low spirits."*

¹Emilián Pugatchóf, a Cossack, in 1774, gathered a band of dis-
contents, pretended to be Peter III, the murdered husband of
Katharine the Great, and for a time created a serious trouble in
the region of the Volga and Iaik Rivers. After burning Kazán
he was defeated by Alexander Bibikof and surrendered by his own
men. He was cruelly executed in Moscow.—TR.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH enters, talks with the DOCTOR. Futility of Medical treatment. "The heat is more important."² But on account of his wife he yields.

Enter TONYA with STYEPA, LYUBA with STARKOVSKY. Conversation about the land. He tries not to offend them. Exeunt all.

NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH and LIZANKA. "I am forever balancing the question whether I have done right. I have accomplished nothing at all. I have ruined Boris. Vasili Nikanorovitch has backslidden. I—a pattern of weakness. It is evident that God does not want me as His servant. He has many other servants and can get along without me. And when I have clearly realized that, calm ensues."

She goes out. He utters a prayer. The PRINCESS rushes in, kills him. All hurry in. He avers he did it accidentally. He writes a petition to the Tsar. Enter VASILI NIKANOROVITCH with DUKHOBORS. He dies rejoicing that the error of the Church is exposed and that he is clear as to the meaning of his life.

²Dutyé for dusha. This expression was borrowed by Lyof Nikolayevitch from the letter of a Slovak who did not speak Russian correctly and understood by this word the heat of the divine fire (dutyé) in his soul (dusha).

Curtain

THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

AKULINA: an old woman of seventy, still hale and hearty, serious-minded, a member of the "Old Believers."

MIKHAÏLA: her son, thirty-five, passionate, conceited, boastful, strong.

MARFA: her daughter-in-law, thirty-two, querulous, talks fast and much.

PARASHKA: ten-year-old daughter of Marfa and Mikhaïla.

TARÁS: Assistant Village Policeman: fifty years old, solemn, speaks slowly, pompous.

A TRAMP: forty years old, tricky, shabby, lays down the law: when drunk his speech is generally unconstrained.

IGNÁT: forty years old, fond of buffoonery, jolly, stupid.

A NEIGHBOR: forty, officious.

THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL

A COMEDY

(1910)

ACT ONE

Autumn. An Izbá with lumber-room

SCENE I

Old AKULINA spinning; MARFA the housewife making bread; the little girl, PARASHKA, rocking the cradle

MARFA. Oh, my heart is full of evil forebodings. Why are they gone so long? Just as t'other day when he went with the wood. He drank up half of it and it's all my fault!

AKULINA. Why look for trouble? It's still early. It's a long way. Even while . . .

MARFA. Early! I should say so. Akimuitch is back already and he started long after my man did and there's no sign of my man at all. It's a wretched life, a wretched life and no joy in it.

AKULINA. Akimuitch had sold his in advance but your man had to find a customer.

MARFA. There'd be no cause to worry if he had gone alone, but he took Ignat with him and when he's with that broad-snouted dog—the Lord forgive me!—there's no good in it: as sure as fate he gets drunk. All day long, it's work, work. All comes on me. If only there was something good to look forward to. But how much pleasure is there in drudging from morning till night!
(*The door opens. Enter TARAS and a ragged TRAMP.*)

SCENE II

The Same, TARAS and THE TRAMP

TARAS. Good afternoon to you! Here, I've brought you someone who wants lodging for the night.

TRAMP¹ (*bowing*). My respects to the masters of the house.

MARFA. Why do you keep saddling them on us all the time? We had one over night last Wednesday. You always take us, yes, you take us. You might have gone to Stepanida's. They haven't any young ones. It's enough for me to look after my own. And here you're always coming to us, yes to us.

TARAS. Everyone takes 'em in turn.

MARFA. "In turn," you say. But I have children and my man's away.

TARAS. Let him spend the night. He won't do any harm.

AKULINA (*to the TRAMP*). Come right in and sit down; we'll look after you.

THE TRAMP. Thank you. I'd like a bite of something if it's possible.

MARFA. Before he looks round he wants something to eat—first thing! Come now, haven't you been begging all through the village?

THE TRAMP (*with a sigh*). That ain't my custom, being what I am. But as I didn't bring along no provisions of my own . . .

(AKULINA rises, gets some bread, breaks off a piece and hands it to the Tramp)

THE TRAMP (*takes the piece of bread*). Merci! (*Sits on a trestle and munches greedily.*)

TARAS. But where is Mikhaïla?

¹ Tramps were quartered at the izbas in turn under the direction of the Village Authorities.

MARFA. He went to town with his hay. He ought to be back, but there's no sign of him. I keep thinking something's happened to him.

TARAS. What could have happened to him?

MARFA. What a question! No good, you may be sure; nothin' but bad. When he's away from home, he don't bother about a single thing. I expect when he does come, he'll be drunk.

AKULINA (*sits at the distaff, to TARAS, pointing to MARFA*). She can't never hold her tongue. This is what I say: women like her worry about everything.

MARFA. If he was alone, there wouldn't be nothing to worry about. But he and Ignat went off together.

TARAS (*smiles*). Well, Ignat Ivanuitch is always ready to take a drop too much; that's true.

AKULINA. He knows Ignat, don't he? Ignat's accountable for himself, ain't he, and he for himself.

MARFA. It's all right for you to talk, *mátushka*. But his debauchery is up to here (*indicating her throat*). When he's sober, I say no ill of him; but when he's drunk you yourself know what he's like. If I say a word, there's trouble.

TARAS. You women are all alike. A fellow takes a drop too much. Well, suppose he does? Let him swagger around, then sleep it off; it'll come out all right in the end. But you women are always nagging.

MARFA. Have your own way. When he's drunk, everything's wrong.

TARAS. But you see you ought to have some reason about it. We men can't help drinking too much once in a while. Your business is in the house,—woman's work but we men can't help it—in doing business or meeting friends. Now if we take a drink, sure there's no harm in it.

MARFA. Yes, it's all right for you to talk, but it's tough on we women. Oh, it's tough! If you men could be hitched to our job for a week, you'd have a different story to tell. Kneadin' dough and cookin' and bakin' and spinnin' and weavin' and the cattle and every kind of work beside washin', dressin' and feedin' empty-bellied kids—it all falls on we women; but if things don't suit

him to a t, specially when he's drunk, that's another story. Oh, the life of we women. . . .

THE TRAMP (*Stopping his munching*). That's right; it's the root of all evil;—I mean, all the cutostraphes of life comes from alcolic beverages.

TARAS. Probably that's what knocked you out too!

THE TRAMP. May be 't did and may be 't didn't; yet I've suffered from it;—I might have had a very different career in life, if 't hadn't been for it.

TARAS. Well, to my mind, if you drinks a reasonable amount, there ain't the least harm in it.

THE TRAMP. Well I'll say this much—it has such a power of inertia in it that it can wholly ruin a man.

MARFA. I say: you hustle and do your level best and the only reward you get for it 's to be ballyragged and beaten like a dog.

THE TRAMP. Moreover, there are men, that is, some persons who so completely lose their reasoning faculties that they indulge in behavior absolutely mischievous.² As long as he don't drink he won't take nothing that don't belong to him, even if you give him a chance at it, but as soon as he's under the influence of liquor he appropriates whatever comes within his reach. And how often he gets flogged and put into jail! When I steer clear of drink, I'm perfectly honest and honorable, but as soon as I get to drinking—I mean . . . as soon as such a person gets to drinking, he will grab whatever he can lay his hands on.

AKULINA. Well, it seems to me it all depends on the man himself.

THE TRAMP. That may be so if the man is well, but it's a kind o' disease.

TARAS. Disease! Nonsense! Thrash him as he deserves and this disease of yours would go away lively.—Good bye for now.

²Postupki sovsyem nyesootvyetstvuyushchiye. The TRAMP uses words which would have delighted Dr. Johnson; while the muzhiki talk in a crisp Boeotian dialect not always easy to render.—Tr.

SCENE III

The Same, without TARAS

(MARFA wipes her hands and starts to go out.)

AKULINA (*Looks at the TRAMP, sees that he has eaten up the bread*). Marfa, oh Marfa, cut him off some more.

MARFA. For him? the idea! I've got to see to the samovár. (*Exit.*)

SCENE IV

The Same, without MARFA

(AKULINA gets up, goes to the table, takes the bread, cuts off a thick slice and gives it to the TRAMP)

THE TRAMP. Merci. I've got a mighty good appetite.

AKULINA. Have you a trade?

THE TRAMP. *I!* I *was* a machinist.

AKULINA. Tell me, did you earn much?

THE TRAMP. Sometimes fifty, sometimes seventy.

AKULINA. That's a good bit! How did you get down an' out?

THE TRAMP. Down and out! I'm not the only one. I got knocked out because in such times as these it is impossible for an honest man to make a living.

SCENE V

The Same, and MARFA

MARFA (*Bringing the samovar*). Lord! No doubt, he'll come home drunk. I feel it in my bones.

AKULINA. Sure he wouldn't go on a spree!

MARFA. If 't ain't one thing, it's another. It's nothin' but work, work—kneedin' and bakin' and cookin' and spinnin' and weavin' and the cattle—everything on me.

(*A cry from the cradle.*) Parashka, rock the little one. O what a life a woman's is! And when the man's drunk, there ain't nothin' right. . . . Say a word that don't suit him . . .

AKULINA (*Starts to make the tea*). This is the last of the tea. Did you remind him to bring some?

MARFA. I did. He promised to bring it. See him bring it! Does he ever think about his home? (*Sets the samovar on the table. THE TRAMP moves away from it.*)

AKULINA. Now what made you leave the table? We're going to drink tea.

THE TRAMP. I tender my thanks for your kind-hearted hospitality. (*Throws away his tsigarka³ and goes back to the table.*)

MARFA. What sort of man be you anyway—peasant or what?

THE TRAMP. I belong neither to the peasantry, mother, nor to the nobility, but to the two-edged class.

MARFA. What do you mean by that? (*Hands him a cup.*)

THE TRAMP. Merci.—I mean my father was a Polish count, tho there were many others as well as him and I had also two mothers. Gener'ly speaking my biography is somewhat of a puzzle.

AKULINA. O Lord! How was that?

THE TRAMP. My mother was dissolute in her life; I mean she was polygamous. And the fathers of her children were all kinds. And I had two mothers for the reason that my real mother managed to get rid of me when I was at a tender age. The dvornik's wife seems to have had a compassionate heart and undertook to bring me up.⁴

MARFA. Have another cup.—D'y' have any schoolin'?

THE TRAMP. My education was also haphazard. My mother—not my real mother but the one who adopted me—put me to blacksmithing. The blacksmith, you see,

³ *Tsigarka*: a cigaret rolled from a bit of newspaper or the like; it is also called a *dog's leg* or a *sheep's horn*.—TR.

⁴ In the original manuscript only. Afterwards expunged.—Russian Editor's Note.

was my first perdagog and his perdagogy was confined to this: that the said blacksmith used to pound me, so that he did not pound his anvil so often's my unfortunate head. Nevertheless, however much he pounded me he could not deprive me of my talent. Then I fell into the hands of a locksmith. And there I was appreciated and accomplished something—I became a first-class artizan. I made the acquaintance of educated men and entered a faction. I was enabled to acquire an intellectual vocabulary. And my life might of been quite superior as I was gifted with colossial talents.

AKULINA. That must be so!

THE TRAMP. And dusaster came—the despotic burden of pop'lar life, and I got into jail, I mean into diprivation of my liberty.

MARFA. What was that for?

THE TRAMP. For our rights.

MARFA. What on earth do you mean—"for our rights"? What kind of rights?

THE TRAMP. What kind of rights? Why, the rights that would prevent the *bourjwar* from eternally idling away their time and permit the hard-working proletariat to receive a recompense for his labors.

AKULINA. You mean, possess the land?

THE TRAMP. Certingly I do. It's all included in the argonomic question.

AKULINA. May God and the Tsáritsa of Heaven grant it! It's getting powerfully overcrowded. But what are you going to do now?

THE TRAMP. What now? Now I'm on my way to Moscow. I'll hire out to some exploiter. What's the use? I give it up. I'll say: "any work, only take me!"

AKULINA. Come now, have some more tea.

THE TRAMP. I thank you, I should say merci. (*Noise and voices in the shed.*)

AKULINA. Here's Mikhaïla—just in time for tea.

MARFA (*rises*). Oh, my grief! With Ignat! Drunk, of course! (*MIKHAÏLA and IGNAT, both drunk, come staggering in.*)

SCENE VI

The Same, MIKHAILA and IGNÁT

IGNAT. Good af'ernoon to y'all! (*Makes the sign of the Cross to the ikon.*) Here we are,—powerful yard!⁵ jus' in time for samovár. We go to shursh—servis all over; come into dinner, ever'thing ate up, we go to wine-shop an' there 't's all right. Ha, ha, ha. You've got tea f'r us, we got liquor f'r you. Z'at's fair, ain't it? (*Laughs.*)

MIKHAILA. Where d'ye find this dude? (*Pulls a bottle out of the bosom of his coat and stands it on the table.*) Bring some cups.

AKULINA. Tell me, did you have a good trip?

IGNAT. Couldn't ha' been better, powerful yard, and we had a drink or two and we got drunk and we've brought some home with us.

MIKHAILA (*Fills cups, offers his mother one and another to THE VAGRANT.*). Here you, have a drink.

THE TRAMP (*Accepts the cup.*). I offer you my heart-felt gratitude. To your health! (*Drains the cup.*)

IGNAT. Goo' boy! How he swills it down, powerful yard! When one's hungry like zhat, I espec' makes nerves tingle. (*Fills up the cup again.*)

THE TRAMP (*Drinks*). I wish you success in all your enterprises.

AKULINA. Did you sell out for a good price?

IGNAT. Goo' price or bad, we drank it all up,—powerful yard!—Ain' 'at so, Mikhaila?

MIKHAILA. Cer-certainly 't is. Why look at it twice? S'long 's we live, le's ge' drunk.

MARFA. And you brag about it; do you? It's all wrong. There's nothing to eat in the house. And here you are at it!

MIKHAILA (*threateningly*). Marfa!

MARFA. Why yell "Marfa"? I know I'm Marfa. Akh, I wish I'd never laid eyes on you, you scoundrel.

MIKHAILA. Marfa, look out!

*Yadryona palka, literally, sound or husky stick.

MARFA. Look out nothing! Why should I look out?

MIKHAILA. Fill up the cups; pass them to the guests.

MARFA. Tfu! goggle-eyed cur! And I don't want to speak to you!

MIKHAILA. You don't? Oh you hag, you slut! What's 'at you're shaying?

MARFA (*Rocks the cradle; the children in terror run to her*). What was I saying? I was saying that I didn't want to speak to you, and that's the end of it.

MIKHAILA. You've forgotten, have you? (*Staggers from the table, gives her a blow on the head, knocks off her kerchief.*) There's one for y'!

MARFA. O-o-oh! (*In tears runs to the door.*)

MIKHAILA. You won't get off, you rotten carcass you! (*Rushes at her.*)

THE TRAMP (*Springs from behind the table and seizes MIKHAILA by the arm*). You haven't the slightest right to do that.

MIKHAILA (*Stops short and gazes at THE TRAMP in astonishment*). Say, do you want to get a thrashing?

THE TRAMP. You have no right at all to inflict insults on the feminine sect.

MIKHAILA. Oh you son of a bitch: do you see this? (*Shows his fist.*)

THE TRAMP. I will not permit exploitation to be applied to the feminine sect.

MIKHAILA. I'll apply such an exploitation to you that you'll go head over heels . . .

THE TRAMP. All right, strike. Why don't you strike? Strike, I say! (*Offers his face.*)

MIKHAILA (*Shrugs his shoulders and spreads his hands out*). Well now, how can I do it?

THE TRAMP. I say: Strike!

MIKHAILA. Well, you certainly are a queer chap, now I look at you. (*Drops his hand and shakes his head.*)

IGNAT (*to the TRAMP*). 'S evident at once-t you're a woman-chaser—powerful yard!

THE TRAMP. I stand for the right.

MIKHAILA (*goes to the table, breathing heavily, to MARFA*). Set up a fat candle on account of him. If 't hadn't a-been f'r him, I'd 'a' smashed y' into bits.

MARFA. What else is to be expected of you? Here I word hard all my days, cookin' and bakin' and then . . .

MIKHAILA. Now that'll do, that'll do. (*Offers liquor to the TRAMP.*) Take a drink!—(*To his wife.*) Let up on that drivel, you! You won't let me have my little fun! Here's the money, ta' care of it: two bills o' three rubles and here's a couple o' twenty-kopek pieces besides.

AKULINA. How about the tea 'n' the sugar I asked you to get?

MIKHAILA (*takes a package out of his pocket and hands it to his wife.* MARFA *seizes the money and goes to the lumber-room, silently rearranging her kerchief*). Whaz stupid folks these women is! (*He again offers liquor to the TRAMP.*) Here, have anuzzer drink!

THE TRAMP (*declines it*). Drink it yourself.

MIKHAILA. Now, no puttin' on airs!

THE TRAMP (*drinks*). Good fortune attend you!

IGNAT (*to the TRAMP*). I s'pec' you've seen something of life in your day! Okh, zat's a fine *bonjourka* you've got on y'! A nirishtocratic *bonjourka*! Now, where zh' get one like zhat? (*He points to his ragged jacket.*) Don't get it mended: it's all right ash 't is. I mean, 't 's reached a good ol' age. Well, what diff'rence 's make? 'f I had one like that, all th' women'd be in love wiz me too! (*To MARFA.*) That's th' truth, ain't it?

AKULINA. It's mean, Ivánuitch, to ridicule a man you've never seen before.

THE TRAMP. It's only uneducatedness!

IGNAT. Y' see, I like him. Have a drink! (*Proffering him more liquor, THE TRAMP drinks.*)

AKULINA. You yourself said, "it's the root of all evil," and that you went to jail on account of it.

MIKHAILA. What d'y' go to jail for?

THE TRAMP (*Very tipsy*). I shuffered from expropriation.

MIKHAILA. How was that?

THE TRAMP. This was 'e way: went to him, to a pot-bellied man. "Hand over y'r money," we say, "or elsh' thish"—a levolver. He wrigglesh. Takesh out two-thousan' two-hunnerd rublesh.

AKULINA. O Lord!

THE TRAMP. We only wanted to do wha' was right—to dishpose of th' sum. Zembrikof wash boss of zhe job. They pounched down on us—thoshe crows. There we were under guard; they shut us up in jail.

IGNAT. And they took away the money?

THE TRAMP. Sure they did. Only they couldn't prove it on me. The Prokuror said thish to me in Court: "You stole the money," says he and I answer back: "Thieves steal money," s'ys I, "but we accomplished expropriation for the Party." An' so he hadn't anything 'ansher me. He looked zis way an' zat way but he couldn't ansher me. "Take him to jail," shays he, that means I was shut up from my free life.

IGNAT (*to MIKHAILA*). 's a clever chap, this rascal. Smar' fella'. (*Fills up the TRAMP'S cup.*) Drink, you skunk!

AKULINA. Tfu! You talk vulgar, you do.

IGNAT. That's not obshene? jus' a shaying I invented; Dirty skunk! To y'r health, bábuska!

(MARFA enters; standing by the table she pours tea.)

MIKHAILA. Well. Now, thash' all right. Nothin' to get mad about. I shay, thanksh to him. And as f'r you, Marfa, I have a high respec' f'r you. (*To the TRAMP*) What's you think about it? (*Hugs MARFA.*) I have a high respec' for my old woman, jus' a high respec'. My ol' woman, on my word, 's firsht class. Catch me swappin' her off f'r any other one!

IGNAT. Thash' good. Babushka Akulina, have a drink. I stand treat.

THE TRAMP. That represents the force of enershy. A minute ago ever'one was melancholy and now 't 's nothin' but good sheer—a friendly state o' mind. Bábuska, I sherish affection for you and for all people. Dealy-beloved brer'en! (*Sings a revolutionary song.*)

MIKHAILA. He feels the effect of it 'cause he was starved.

Curtain.

ACT TWO

(*The Same Cottage. Morning*)

SCENE I

MARFA *and* AKULINA. (MIKHAÏLA *asleep*)

MARFA (*carries an ax*). Must go and chop up wood.

AKULINA (*with a bucket*). He'd a' given you a drubbing last evenin', if it hadn't a-been for that man. But he's not to be seen. Can he 'a' gone? 't must be he's gone. (*They go out one after the other.*)

SCENE II

MIKHAÏLA *alone*

MIKHAÏLA (*climbers down from oven*). Seems to me that dear little Sun's rather high. (*Stands up, gets into his boots.*) She an' the old mother must have gone for water. My head aches, oh, how it aches. I'll swear off! Henceforth the devils may drink it! (*Prays to God, washes his face and hands.*) Must go and harness up. (MARFA *enters with faggots.*)

SCENE III

MIKHAÏLA *and* MARFA

MARFA. So yesterday evening's tramp 's gone, has he?

MIKHAÏLA. He must 'a' gone—'s not to be seen.

MARFA. Well, God be with him. But he seemed like a clever man.

MIKHAÏLA. 'Cause he stuck up for you?

MARFA. What difference does that make to me?

(MIKHAILA *completes his toilet.*) I s'pose you put away the tea and sugar you brought last evening, didn't you?

MIKHAILA. I thought you took them.

(*Enter AKULINA with the bucket*)

SCENE IV

The Same, and AKULINA

MARFA (*to the old woman*). Matushka, did you take the parcel?

AKULINA. I don't know nothing about it.

MIKHAILA. I left it by the window yesterday afternoon.

AKULINA. Oh, so you did—I saw you.

MARFA. Where can it be? (*They all search.*)

AKULINA. Just think, what a crime! (*A NEIGHBOR enters.*)

SCENE V

The Same, and the NEIGHBOR

NEIGHBOR. What do you say, Tikhonuitch,¹ shall we go after our wood, what?

MIKHAILA. Well, why not? I'll hitch up after a bit.—You see we've lost something.

NEIGHBOR. Tha' so? What is it?

MARFA. Why my man brought a package from town yesterday afternoon: tea, sugar, he laid it down by the window. I neglected to put it away: now it's lost—can't find it nowhere.

MIKHAILA. We're laying the sin on a tramp: he spent the night there.

THE NEIGHBOR. What kind of a tramp?

MARFA. A lean, unshaven fellow.

MIKHAILA. Wore a ragged pinzhachishka.²

NEIGHBOR. Bushy-haired? hooked nose?

¹ Mikhaïla Tikhónuitch.

² Little *pea jacket*.

MIKHAILA. Why, yes.

NEIGHBOR. I just met him, wondered who he was—he was stepping along so fast.

MIKHAILA. That was the one, sure. Did you meet him fur from here?

NEIGHBOR. He hadn't reached the bridge, I think.

MIKHAILA (*Seizes his cap and hurriedly exit with the NEIGHBOR*). We must overtake him. That's the rascal—he's the one!

SCENE VI

The Same, without MIKHAILA and the NEIGHBOR.

MARFA. Okh, the sin of it, the sin of it! No question he done it.

AKULINA. But may be he didn't. One time—twenty years ago 't was—in the same way they charged a man with stealing a horse. A crowd collected: one said how he'd seen him take it: another told how he had seen him leading it off. And the nag was piebald, my uncle's, easily known. The crowd kept growing, they started a search and found a fellow in the woods—the very one! “'twas you,” they says. He swears, he calls God to witness that it wasn't. “Why even look at him,” says they? The women declared he done it. He said something saucy. Yegor Lapushkin—he's dead—a hot-tempered muzhik he was, he couldn't stand it, he gave him one in the snout. “'twas you,” says he. He struck him again. The others 'tacked him: they went for him with sticks and beat him to death. Next day they caught the real thief. And all the time he wasn't the thief at all; he was only in the woods after faggots.

MARFA. 'Tis a fact, one might make a mistake. Though he's down and out one can see he's a good man.

AKULINA. Yes, he's terrible low down and 't 's no use punishing such a fellow.

MARFA. What's that noise! I b'lieve they've got him. (*Into the room come MIKHAILA, the NEIGHBOR, then an old man, and a youth, shoving the TRAMP of the previous afternoon.*)

SCENE VI

*The Same, MIKHAILA, NEIGHBOR, OLD MAN, YOUTH
and the TRAMP*

MIKHAILA (*holds in his hands the parcel of tea and sugar. To his wife, in great excitement*). We found the goods on him, in his breeches. The dirty thief.

AKULINA (*to MARFA*). He's the very one! . . . poor fellow. He is hanging his head!

MARFA. Evidently he's the thief. He meant himself when he said a man always took whatever he happened to lay his hands on if he had been drinking.

THE TRAMP. I'm no thief. I'm an expropriator. I'm a worker—I have to live. You can't understand. Do what you please.

THE NEIGHBOR. Take him to the Stárosta or straight to the police.

THE TRAMP. I say, do whatever you please. I'm not afraid of any thing and I'm willing to suffer for my convictions. If only you were people of culture, you would be able to understand. . . .

MARFA (*to her Husband*). Better let him go in God's name. We've got the stuff back. Better let him go and not put a sin on us.

MIKHAILA (*repeating his wife's words*). "A sin!" You'd teach us, hey! Perhaps we don't know what to do without your meddlin'!

MARFA. I only say I'd let him off . . .

MIKHAILA. "Let him off!" Perhaps we don't know what to do without you! Well, you're a fool. "Let him off!" Whether he gets off or not, I have a word for him so he'll feel it. (*To the TRAMP*) Now you listen, *moosyé*, to what I want to say to you. Now though you are in a low down condition, yet you have done very wrong. Any one else would have given you a sound cudgelling, yes and handed you over to the police besides; but this is what I will say. You did wrong, about as wrong's could be. Only you are in a terrible low condition and I don't want to be too rough on you. (*He hesitates: all are silent.—Solemnly*) God go with you

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and don't do such a thing again. (*Looks at his wife.*) And you want to teach me!

THE NEIGHBOR. It's no use, Mikhaila. O it's no use! you only encourage them . . .

MIKHAILA (*still holds the package in his hand*). Use or no use, it's my affair. (*To his wife*) And you want to teach me! (*Hesitates, looking at the package: then deliberately gives it to the TRAMP, glancing at his wife.*) And take this along; you'll have tea to drink on the road. (*To his wife*) And you want to teach me! Get you gone, I said, get you gone! Make no words about it.

THE TRAMP (*takes the package. A silence.*) You think I don't comprehend. (*His voice trembles.*) I comprehend absolutely. If you had licked me like a dog, it would have been easier for me. Perhaps I don't comprehend what I am! I am a scoundrel, that is, a degenerate, that is. Forgive me, for Christ's sake! (*With a sob, he throws the tea and sugar on the table and exit swiftly.*)

SCENE VII

The Same, without the TRAMP

MARFA. Thank goodness, he didn't take 'em, else there wouldn't 'a' been any for our breakfast.

MIKHAILA (*to his wife*). And you wanted to teach me!

NEIGHBOR. Akh, he cried, poor fellow!

AKULINA. Indeed he was a real man!

Curtain

March 29, 1910. Yasnaya Polyana.

Middle of June, 1910. Meshcherskoyé. Moscow Gubernii.

In the Spring of 1910, at V. G. Chertkóf's estate, Telyatenki, his son, V. V. Chertkóf, and some young friends, boys of the neighborhood, were getting up amateur theatricals. Among other pieces "Pyervuii Vinokur" ("The First Distiller") was staged. Lyof Nikolayevitch was much interested in these plays and the idea occurred to him to write a short drama for the Telyatenki theater. In this way the Comedy, "Ot nyei Vsyé Káchestva" ("The Root of all Evil"; literally "From her all qualities") was created.—Russian Editors' Note.

THE WISDOM OF CHILDREN

[RUSSIAN EDITOR'S NOTE.—These short Scenes from child-life were suggested to Lyof Nikolayevitch by a Dialog between a Father and Son in the Viennese paper, "Wohlstand für Alle."

In the Diary of Lyof Nikolayevitch's Secretary, N. N. Gusef ("Two Years with L. N. Tolstoi") under date of January 15 (O. S.), 1909, appears the following reference to this:

"After he had read the dialog printed in this magazine, in which, under the form of a conversation between a boy and an adult, serious thoughts were elucidated, Lyof Nikolayevitch translated it and then it occurred to him to use this method of presenting in a most simple form the truths so dear to him regarding human life."

And he jotted down a long list of themes which he proposed treating in this way.

Here is the list of these themes: (1) Of Religion; (2) of War; (3) of the Fatherland; (4) of Taxes; (5) of Drunkenness; (6) of Goodness; (7) of Rewards for Work; (8) of Prisons; (9) of Punishment; (10) of Rich Men; (11) of Judgments; (12) of Printing; (13) of Art; (14) of Science; (15) of Civil Justice; (16) of Criminal Justice; (17) of Education; (18) of Labor; (19) of Hunting; (20) of Meat-eating; (21) of Cities; (22) of the Church; (23) of Relics; (24) of Sacraments; (25) of Regard for Antiquity; (26) of Games; (27) Culture; (28) of the Right of Might; (29) of the Earth; (30) of the Idle; (31) of God.

Lyof Nikolayevitch finished only twenty of these themes. It remains to remark that some of the Scenes as supplied to us are merely the first rough drafts uncopied, jotted down for memoranda and never having been subjected to the slightest revision by the author.]

THE WISDOM OF CHILDREN

(1909)

I

ON RELIGION

BOY and MOTHER

BOY. Why is Nurse dressing up in her best things to-day and making me put on a clean shirt?

MOTHER. Because to-day is a holiday and we are going to church.

BOY. What kind of a holiday?

MOTHER. Ascension Day.

BOY. What does Ascension mean?

MOTHER. It means that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven.

BOY. What does "ascended" mean?

MOTHER. It means—flew up.

BOY. But how did he fly up? On wings?

MOTHER. No, not on wings, but simply flew up, because he was God, and God can do everything.

BOY. Yes, but where did he fly to? Papa told me that Heaven is only imaginary and that there is really nothing in the sky but stars and beyond the stars other stars and there is no end to the sky. Where did he fly to then?

MOTHER (*Smiling*). One can't understand everything; one must have faith.

BOY. In what?

MOTHER. In what those older than you say.

BOY. But you yourself told me when the salt was spilt and I said someone would die because of it—you yourself told me I mustn't believe such silly things!

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MOTHER. Well, one mustn't believe in such silly things.

BOY. But how am I to know what are silly things and what are not silly things?

MOTHER. Because one must believe the true Faith and not silly things!

BOY. But what is the true Faith?

MOTHER. Our Faith (*Aside*) I believe I am talking nonsense myself! (*Aloud.*) So come, tell papa we are off and put on your scarf.

BOY. May I have some chocolate after Mass?

II

ON WARS

KARLCHEN SCHMIDT, 9; PÉTYA ORLOF, 10, and MASHA ORLOVA, 8.

KARLCHEN SCHMIDT. Why doesn't our Prussia permit the Russians to take land from us?

PETYA ORLOF. Well, we say that the land is ours because we conquered it first.

MASHA ORLOVA. What do you mean by "ours?"

PETYA ORLOF. You're only a little girl; you don't understand. "Ours" means "Our Empire."

KARLCHEN SCHMIDT. It's this way everywhere: some men belong to one country, some to another.

MASHA ORLOVA. What one do I belong to?

PETYA ORLOF. The same as all of us—to Russia.

MASHA ORLOVA. But suppose I don't want to?

PETYA ORLOF. But you do want to; even if you didn't, still you'd be Russian. Every nation has its Tsar, its King . . .

KARLCHEN SCHMIDT (*Interrupts*). Or Parliament.

PETYA ORLOF. Each one has its army, each levies taxes from its own people.

MASHA ORLOVA. But why are they so—so separate?

PETYA ORLOF. Why? Because each government is different.

MASHA ORLOVA. Yes, but why separate?

KARLCHEN SCHMIDT. Why? Because every man loves his own country.

MASHA ORLOVA. I don't understand why they are separate. Why wouldn't it be better for all to be together?

PETYA ORLOF. In playing games it is better to be together, but this is not a game but a serious matter.

MASHA ORLOVA. I don't understand.

KARLCHEN SCHMIDT. When you grow up you'll understand.

MASHA ORLOVA. Then I don't want to grow up.

PETYA ORLOF. You're a little girl but obstinate like all the rest.

III

ON THE FATHERLAND, THE EMPIRE

GAVRILA, *a Soldier in the Reserves, in domestic service.*
MISHA, *his Master's young Son*

GAVRILA. Well, good-bye, Mishenka, my dear little Master. Now if God will only let us meet again . . .

MISHA. So you are really going away?

GAVRILA. Yes, that I am. There's war again and I'm in the reserves.

MISHA. War with whom? Who is fighting with whom?

GAVRILA. God knows. It's too much for me. I have read about it in the papers, but I can't make head or tail of it. They say the Austriak is mad with us, because he—now how was it?—because we—favored them others in something . . .

MISHA. But what makes you go?

GAVRILA. Oh, how can I help it? It's for the Tsar, the Fatherland—the Orthodox Faith.

MISHA. But you don't want to go, do you?

GAVRILA. Who would want to leave his wife and children? Besides why should I myself want to go, after this good way of livin'?

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MISHA. Then what makes you go? Say "I don't want to" and don't go. What would they do to you?

GAVRILA (*Smiles*). What would they do? Drag me away by force!

MISHA. Yes, but who would drag you away?

GAVRILA. Just men, men like myself—under orders!

MISHA. But why do they drag you off? Especially if they are men just like you?

GAVRILA. Oh, it's the higher officers! Orders are given and one is dragged off.

MISHA. But suppose they should refuse to?

GAVRILA. They can't help themselves.

MISHA. Why not?

GAVRILA. Because . . . because it's the law.

MISHA. What kind of a law?

GAVRILA. You talk so queer! We're wasting time discussing it. Must go and start the samovár for the last time.

IV

ON TAXES

ELDER *and* GRUSHKA, *Seven Years Old*

ELDER (*Enters a poor Izbá. No one is there except Seven-year-old GRUSHKA. Looks around*). Nobody in?

GRUSHKA. Mamka's gone for the cow and Fyedka's at the Master's.

ELDER. Well then, tell your mamka then that the Elder was here. Say, this is the third time I've reminded her; say I demand that she bring the tax-money without fail by Sunday: if she don't I'll take the cow.

GRUSHKA. Why'll you take the cow? Are you a thief? We won't let her go.

ELDER (*Smiles*). I declare, you're such a smart little girl! What's your name?

GRUSHKA. Grushka.

ELDER. Ai, Grushka, clever girl! But listen!—you tell your mother that I'm no thief but I'll take the cow.

GRUSHKA. But why will you take the cow if you aren't a thief?

ELDER. This is why: what the law requires must be paid. I take the cow for taxes.

GRUSHKA. What do you mean, taxes?

ELDER. What a saucy little girl! What's taxes? It's what the Tsar orders folks to pay.

GRUSHKA. To who?

ELDER. Everybody knows who it goes to! To the Tsar! And when he gets it, they divide it up.

GRUSHKA. Why. Is the Tsar poor? We're poor, the Tsar's rich. Why'd they take it from us?

ELDER. He doesn't take it for himself. He needs it for us, poor fools, for our needs, for the officials, for the army, for education; on us for our good.

GRUSHKA. What good is it for us if you take away our cow? That is not good for us.

ELDER. When you grow up, you'll understand. So look, tell your mamka.

GRUSHKA. I'm not going to tell her such nonsense. If you and the Tsar need anything, do it for yourselves and what we need we'll do for ourselves.

ELDER. This girl, I swear, will be poison when she gets growed up!

V

ON HARSH JUDGMENTS

MITYA, 10; ILYUSHA, 9; SONYA, 6

MITYA. Says I to Pyotr Semyonovitch, we can accuse ourselves to going without clothes. And says he: No we can't. Then says I, Mikhail Ivanovitch told me that we had got our faces used to bearing the cold; in the same way the whole body could. "Your Mikhail Ivanovitch," says he, "is a fool." (*Laughs.*) But Mikhail Ivanovitch said to me only last evening, "your Pyotr Semyonovitch," says he, "is telling a lot of lies." "Well," says he, "the law is not written for fools." (*Laughter.*)

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ILYUSHA. I should have said to him, You call him one and he calls you one.

MITYA. No, honest, I don't know which of them is the fool.

SONYA. Both are fools. He who calls anyone a fool is a fool himself.

ILYUSHA. But you just called them both fools. So you must be a fool yourself.

MITYA. I don't like it a bit when you talk like that about others and behind their backs. When I get to be big, I am not going to do that way. I am going to say what I think.

ILYUSHA. So am I.

SONYA. Well, I'll do my own way.

MITYA. What do you mean, your own way?

SONYA. I mean what I say. If I want to I'll speak and if I don't want to I won't speak.

ILYUSHA. What a fool you are!

SONYA. You just said you weren't going to call bad names.

ILYUSHA. Yes, but this is not behind her back.

VI

ON KINDNESS

The Children MASHA and MISHA are building a hut for their Dolls in front of their Home

MISHA (*Angrily to MASHA*). Not that way! Pull this stick. Stupid girl!

STARUKHA (*Comes out on the door-step, makes the sign of the cross, and exclaims*): Christ be her salvation! What an angelic soul! She's kind to us all! (*The Children stop playing and gaze at the Old Woman.*)

MISHA. Whom do you mean?

STARUKHA. Your Mátushka. She lives with God. She's kind to us poor folks. Here she's given me a petticoat and tea and some money. May the Lord, may

the Tsaritsa of Heaven be her salvation! Not like that infidel over there: "Lots of you folks prowling around," says he. And such an ugly dog he has too! I barely escaped from them.

MASHA. Who was that?

STARUKHA. Opposite the dram shop. Okh! A rich man and unkind. Well, may God deal with him! But how grateful I am to *her*, the sweet dove,¹ for what she gave me and the comfort, when I am so poor! And how could we live at all, if it wasn't for such folks! (*Weeps.*)

MASHA (*To MISHA*). How kind she is!

STARUKHA. When you grow up, children, be like her and take care of the poor. And God will take care of you. (*Goes away.*)

MISHA. What a pitiful old thing!

MASHA. Indeed I'm glad mama gave to her.

MISHA. Well, I don't see why not give when there's plenty. We aren't poor and she is.

MASHA. You remember how John the Baptist said: "Whoever has two garments give away one of them."

MISHA. Yes, when I grow up, I'm going to give everything away.

MASHA. That's impossible.

MISHA. Why is it impossible?

MASHA. What would you do yourself?

MISHA. I'd get along all right. One must be good to everybody. And everybody will be happy.

And MISHA stopped playing and went to the nursery, tore a page out of a copy-book and wrote something on it and put it into his pocket. On the paper was written:

NADA BUT DOBRUM ²—ONE MUST BE GOOD TO EVERYBODY.

¹ *Golubushka.*

² *For Nada buit' dobruim.*

VII

ON THE REMUNERATION OF LABOR

FATHER *and* KATYA, 9, *and* FEDYA, 8.

KATYA. Papa, our sled is broke. Can you mend it?

FATHER. No, golubchik, I can't. I don't know how. You must give it to Prokhor: he'll mend it for you.

KATYA. We went to the Servants' Quarters. He said he was too busy. He is making a gate.

FATHER. Well, what's to be done about it?—Wait.

FEDYA. But papa, don't you know at all how to do it?

FATHER (*Smiles*). Not the least notion how, little brother!

FEDYA. Don't you know how to do anything?

FATHER (*Laughs*). Well, I can do some things. But what Prokhor can do I can't.

FEDYA. Can you make samovárs like Vasili?

FATHER. No, nor that either.

FEDYA. And can you harness horses?

FATHER. No, I can't.

FEDYA. Now I wonder. Why don't we know how to do a single thing while they do everything for us. Is that right?

FATHER. Everyone has his own job. Some day you will learn and know what each one must know how to do.

FEDYA. Won't we have to know how to cook meals and harness horses?

FATHER. There are things more important than that.

FEDYA. Yes I understand: to be good, not to lose one's temper, not to quarrel. But couldn't we cook meals and harness horses and still be good? We could, couldn't we?

FATHER. Certainly you could. Wait, when you grow up you will understand.

FEDYA. But suppose I don't grow up?

FATHER. What stupid things you say!

KATYA. May we tell Prokhor to mend the sled?

FATHER. Certainly you may. Go to Prokhor and say that it's my orders.

VIII

ON DRUNKENNESS

EVENING. AUTUMN

MAKARKA, 12, and MARFUTKA, 6, come out of their home into the street. MARFUTKA is weeping. PAVLUSHKA, 10, is standing on the doorstep of the adjoining house.

PAVLUSHKA. What the devil brings you out, for deeds of darkness?

MAKARKA. He's been drinking again.

PAVLUSHKA. Uncle Prokhor?

MAKARKA. Well, who else?

MARFUTKA. He's beating mamka.

MAKARKA. And I'm not going in. He'll thrash me too. (*Sits down on the threshold.*) I'm going to stay here to-night. I am not going in.

(*Silence. MARFUTKA weeps.*)

PAVLUSHKA (*To MARFUTKA*). Now stop! No use! What can you do about it? Stop!

MARFUTKA (*Through her tears*). If I were the Tsar I'd thrash those that let him have vodka. I'd teach 'em not to keep this vodka.

MAKARKA. The idea! The Tsar himself deals in vodka; only he forbids others to sell it, so he won't lose the profit.

PAVLUSHKA. Aren't you talking nonsense?

MAKARKA. "Talking nonsense" nothing! Go and ask why was Akulina put into the lockup. 'Twas because she sold wine and did not pay us for the right.

PAVLUSHKA. Was that it? 'Twas said she did something against the law . . .

MAKARKA. Well, it's against the law to sell liquor without a license.

MARFUTKA. I'd forbid her doing it. Any kind of liquor. Otherwise it's no use and so he beats us all—'tain't fair.

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PAVLUSHKA (*To MAKARKA*). You talk queer. I'll ask the teacher to-morrow. He must know.

MAKARKA. Yes, do ask him.

(*The next morning, PROKHOR, MAKARKA'S Father, sobered, having slept off his drink, has gone out. MAKARKA'S Mother with eye black and blue and swollen has been mixing dough. PAVLUSHKA has gone to school. The children have not as yet assembled. The TEACHER is sitting on the door-step and smoking, as the scholars enter the school-house.*

PAVLUSHKA (*Approaching the Teacher*). Now tell me, Yevgeny Semyonitch, is it true what some one told me yesterday that the Tsar sells vodka while Akulina was put into the lock-up for doing the same thing?

TEACHER. What you ask is stupid and the person who told you that is a fool. The Tsar isn't in trade. That's why he's Tsar. And Akulina was shut up in jail precisely because she sold liquor without a license, consequently causing a loss to the Treasury.

PAVLUSHKA. Why a loss?

TEACHER. Because an excise-tax is laid on liquor. A vedro³ costs the Treasury two rubles and sells for eight rubles and forty kopeks. You see this surplus serves to make revenue for the State and this is a very large revenue—seven-hundred millions.⁴

PAVLUSHKA. Then the more liquor drank, the bigger the revenue?

TEACHER. Of course. If it were not for this revenue, there would not be enough to maintain armies and schools and whatever else we all need.

PAVLUSHKA. But if we all need this why not take the money from us direct and why through liquor?

TEACHER. Why "through liquor"? Because, you see, the law says so. Now, children, since you're all come, take your seats.

³In liquid measures a vedró is equivalent to 2.7 gallons.

⁴The prices and size of the revenue cited by the Teacher were left blank by Count Tolstoi, supposedly because he did not have the data at hand: they were supplied by the Russian Editors, as reported in 1910.—Tr.

IX

ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

PYOTR PETROVITCH, *Professor.* MARYA IVANOVNA: *his Wife, is sewing. FEBYA, their Son, 9, is listening to the conversation of his Father, and IVAN VASILYEVITCH, Military Prokurór.*

IVAN VASILYEVITCH. But one can deny the teaching of History. We not only have seen it in France after the Revolution and in other historical moments, but we see it now among ourselves that segregation—that is to say, the elimination of those that are perverted and dangerous to Society,—accomplishes its intent.

PYOTR PETROVITCH. No, we can not know that,—we can not know the ultimate consequences and it does not justify exceptional regulations.

IVAN VASILYEVITCH. But we likewise have no right to presuppose that the consequences of exceptional measures will be harmful and even if they should prove to be harmful that the reason for it would be found precisely in the application of exceptional measures. This is my first argument. My second is that severity can not fail to have its effect on men who have lost all human characteristics and have become wild beasts. In what other way than by “frightfulness” can you act upon such men as the one who in cold blood murdered an old woman and three children just for the sake of stealing three hundred rubles?

PYOTR PETROVITCH. But look here, I do not absolutely reject the infliction of the death-penalty: I do object to special courts-martial which inflict it so frequently. If these repeated executions had an intimidating effect only—but in addition to their intimidating effect, they demoralize: they accustom men to regard with indifference the murder of their fellow men.

PYOTR PETROVITCH. The advantage!

IVAN VASILYEVITCH. I repeat, we do not know the ultimate consequences, but knowing the advantage . . .

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IVAN VASILYEVITCH. Yes, the advantage of the immediate consequences, we have no right to find fault with it. How can Society afford not to visit retribution for the evil deeds of such a criminal as . . .

PYOTR PETROVITCH. That is, Society is to wreak vengeance?

IVAN VASILYEVITCH. No, not wreak vengeance, but, the contrary,—substitute a public retribution for a private vengeance.

PYOTR PETROVITCH. Yes, but then this ought to be carried out in forms once and for all prescribed by Law and not by exceptional measures.

IVAN VASILYEVITCH. Public retribution supplants that fortuitous, exaggerated, lawless, frequently unfounded mistaken vengeance which a private person might put into effect.

PYOTR PETROVITCH (*Becoming heated*). Do you mean to say that in your opinion, this retribution is never put into effect at the present time at haphazard, never without good grounds, never mistakenly? No, I will certainly not grant it. None of your arguments will ever convince me or anyone else that these exceptional circumstances which have brought about the execution of thousands and are all the time adding to the number could ever be sensible or legal or beneficial. (*Gets up and walks back and forth in excitement.*)

FEDYA (*To his Mother*). Mama, what is papa quarreling about?

MARYA IVANOVNA. Papa thinks it is wrong that there are so many executions.

FEDYA. Why, do they murder men to death?

MARYA IVANOVNA. Yes. He thinks that the death-penalty ought not to be inflicted so often.

FEDYA (*Goes across to his FATHER*). Papa, why does it say in the Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt not kill"? Does it not mean it must not be done at all?

PYOTR PETROVITCH (*Smiling*). That does not apply to what we are talking about but means that one man should not kill another.

FEDYA. Yes, but when men are executed, they are killed just the same, aren't they?

PYOTR PETROVITCH. Of course, but we must understand when and why it is permissible.

FEDYA. But when is it permissible?

PYOTR PETROVITCH. Now how can I tell you? For instance in war, or after a malefactor has murdered someone. How can he be allowed to go on and not be punished?

FEDYA. But why does it say in the New Testament to love everyone and to forgive everyone?

PYOTR PETROVITCH. It would be admirable if this could be so. But it can not be done.

FEDYA. Why not?

PYOTR PETROVITCH. Because it can't. (*Turns to IVAN VASILYEVITCH who has been listening to FEDYA with a smile*) Those are my views, my worthy Ivan Vasilyevitch and I can not recognize the advantage of your exceptional conditions and courts-martial.

X

ON PRISONS

SEMKA, 13; AKSYUTKA, 10; MITKA, 10; PALASHKA, 10; VANKA, 8. (*After gathering mushrooms they are sitting by the well.*)

AKSYUTKA. And oh what a rumpus Auntie Matryona did make! And the kids—one would set up a yell, then all crying at once, all at once.

VANKA. What made 'em squall?

PALASHKA. What made 'em squall! Their dad was lugged off to prison. Enough to make 'em squall.

VANKA. What for—to jail?

ASYUTKA. I d'n know. They came; "Here you!" they said; they grabbed him and lugged him off. We saw the whole thing . . .

SEMKA. They 'rested him to keep him from stealing horses. Demkin's was stole and Krasnof's—they done

both jobs. An' our gelding got into their clutches too. What would you do to him—pat him on the head?

AKSYUTKA. That's the talk—only it's tough on the little kids. You see, there's four of 'em. And poor!—nothin' to eat. They come over to us to-day.

SEMKA. But one shouldn't steal!

MITKA. Yes, but he did the stealing, not the kids. Why should they become beggars?

SEMKA. But don't steal!

MITKA. Yes, but it wasn't the kids—he done it!

SEMKA. There it goes always "the kids, the kids!" Why did he do wrong? Is he going to steal just because he's got a lot of kids?

VANKA. What are they goin' to do to him there, in jail?

AKSYUTKA. Keep him there, that's all.

VANKA. Will they feed him?

SEMKA. That's why they're not afraid—cursed horse-stealers! What's the lock-up to him? Everything provided, sit still, stay in doors! If I was Tsar I'd know how to handle these horse-stealers. I'd teach 'em! What do they care? There he'll sit with his pals and do nothing. They learn each other how to steal better next time. Granddad said Petrukha used to be a perfec'ly fine young feller but after he'd been in the lock-up once he came out a devil. And since that time he began . . .

VANKA. Then why do they lock 'em up?

SEMKA. Huh! just ask!

AKSYUTKA. They lock him up and feed him . . .

SEMKA (*Interrupts*). To learn his job better . . .

AKSYUTKA. While his kids and their mamka will starve to death! They're neighbors, you see, I'm sorry for 'em. What'll become of them? They'll come and beg for somethin' to eat; we can't refuse.

VANKA. Then why do they put folks in jail?

SEMKA. But what is to be done with 'em?

VANKA. What? What's to be done with them? Something so that . . .

SEMKA. Yes, it's easy to say "something," but what? You don't know! Cleverer men than you have thought about it but they can't think it out.

PALASHKA. But I think that if I was the Tsaritsa . . .

AKSYUTKA (Laughs). Well, what would you do if you was Tsaritsa?

PALASHKA. Well, I'd have it so that no one should steal and so that the kids wouldn't cry.

AKSYUTKA. Yes, but how would you do it?

PALASHKA. I'd bring it about so that all would get what they needed, and no one would be harmed and all would be happy.

SEMKA. Aï, Tsaritsa! And how would you do this?

PALASHKA. Why, I'd do it!

MITKA. Well, come on, let's go through where the birches are thick: the girls got a lot there lately.

SEMKA. That's the idea! Let's be off, kids! And you, Tsaritsa, look out you don't spill your mushrooms, but then you're very smart!

(*They get up and depart.*)

XI

ON WEALTH

LANDOWNER, *his* WIFE, *their* DAUGHTER and Six-year-old VÁSYA are sitting on the Balcony at Tea. Older Children are playing Tennis. A Young TRAMP approaches.

KHOZYAIN (*To the TRAMP*). What is it?

TRAMP (*Bows*). It's evident what! Out of work: help me. In rags, half-starved, I have been walking. I was in Moscow, now I'm beating it for home. Help a poor man!

KHOZYAIN. But why are you poor?

TRAMP. It's evident why—from necessity.

KHOZYAIN. If you'd work you wouldn't be poor.

TRAMP. I'd be glad to work, but these days there's no work to be had. They've shut everything down.

KHOZYAIN. Why if others are working can't you get work?

TRAMP. Believe me, on my conscience I'd be glad with

all my heart to work—they won't give me any. Have pity on me, barin; I have gone two days without a bite to eat.

KHOZYAIN (*Looks into his pocket-book. To his Wife*). Avez-vous de la petite monnaie? Je n'ai que des assignats.⁵

KHOZYAIKA (*To VASYA*). Be a good boy and go look in my bag on the little table near the bed in my room, there's a purse in it, bring it to me. (*VASYA does not hear his Mother but stares with all his eyes at the TRAMP.*) Vasya, don't you hear what I say? (*Pulls him by the sleeve.*) Vasya!

VASYA. What is it, mama? (*His Mother tells him again where to go and what to get. He gives a start.*) In a minute! (*Exit, all the time staring at the TRAMP.*)

KHAZYAIN. Wait, just a moment. (*The TRAMP steps to one side—To his Wife—in French*) It's dreadful, so many of these people wandering around without work. It's all laziness!

KHOZYAIKA. But still it's dreadful if he is hungry.

KHOZYAIN. Exaggeration!

KHOZYAIKA. They say it's just the same abroad. I read that in New York there are about a hundred-thousand unemployed! Will you have some more tea?

KHOZYAIN. Make it a bit weaker. (*Begins to smoke. Silence. The TRAMP glances at them, shakes his head and coughs evidently to attract their attention. VASYA runs in with the purse and immediately looks around for the TRAMP and having given the purse to his Mother, stares at the man. The Father takes a grivennik (a ten-kopek piece) from the purse*): See here, take this.

TRAMP (*Pulls off his cap, bows, takes the coin*). Thank you, much obliged even for this. I'm grateful to you for showing compassion on a poor man.

KHOZYAIN. I am chiefly sorry because you don't work. He who works will not want.

TRAMP (*Having taken the coin puts on his cap again and as he turns away says*): It's just so: by work you get not rich but bent.⁶ (*Walks away.*)

⁵ Have you any change? I have nothing but bills.

⁶ Nye bogat a gorbat.

VASYA. What did he say?

KHOZYAIN. He repeated one of those stupid peasant proverbs—that if you work you get a hump-back but don't get rich.

VASYA. Is that wrong?

KHOZYAIN. Of course, it's wrong? Anyone who, like these fellows, straggles round and refuses to work is always poor. Only those who work get rich.

VASYA. Why is it we don't work and yet are rich?

KHOZYAIKA (*Laughs*). How do you know that papa does not work?

VASYA. I don't know, but evidently we are very rich and so papa must have to work awful hard. But does he work so hard?

KHOZYAIN. There are varieties of work. Maybe my work couldn't be done by everyone.

VASYA. What kind of work is yours?

KHOZYAIN. My work is to have you fed, clad and taught!

VASYA. Yes, but he has to do that too. So why must he tramp round so miserably, while here we are so . . .

KHOZYAIN (*Laughing*). Here we have a natural Socialist!

KHOZYAIKA. Yes it is said *Ein Narr kann mehr fragen, als tausend Weise antworten können—One fool can ask questions that a thousand Sages can not answer.* Only we'd better say *ein Kind*—not a fool but every child!

XII

ON LOVING THOSE THAT INJURE YOU

MASHA, IO, and VANYA, 8

MASHA. I was just thinking: if mama would come back now and take us with her, then we might go first to the *Passage* and afterwards to Nastya's. But what would you like?

VANYA. Me? I'd like it just as it was yesterday.

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MASHA. Yes, and what happened yesterday? Grisha pummeled you and then you and Grisha both cried. There wasn't much fun in that!

VANYA. Well, that's exactly what there was! It was so good that nothing could possibly be better. And that's what I should like to have happen again to-day.

MASHA. I don't understand.

VANYA. Well, this is the way of it; I will explain it to you—what I want. You remember how last Sunday Uncle Pavel Ivanovitch . . . How I love him!

VANYA. Who doesn't love him? Mama says he's a saint. And that's a fact!

MASHA. Then you remember last Sunday he told us a story how they kept maltreating a man and the worse they treated him the more he loved them. They call him names and he speaks pleasantly to them. They strike him and he helps them. Dyadenka said that if anyone did like that, it would be good for the one that did. I liked the idea and I wanted to do that way. And so when Grisha struck me yesterday, I remembered it and I kissed him and he cried. And it made me feel so happy. But yesterday I did the wrong thing with nurse. She started to scold me and I forgot myself and was saucy to her. And so now I should like to try again as I did with Grisha.

MASHA. You mean you'd like someone to strike you?

VANYA. Indeed I would. I would do just the same as I did with Grisha and I should feel happy right away.

MASHA. What nonsense that is! Stupid you were and stupid you are!

VANYA. Well, maybe I am stupid but I know now how one must do to be always happy.

MASHA. You awful ninny! And does this really make a person happy.

VANYA. Yes, indeed it does.

XIII

ON PRINTING

Study-room

VOLODYA, *Student at the Gymnasium, 14, is reading, preparing his lessons.* SONYA, 15, *is writing.* Enter DVORNIK *with a heavy bundle on his back, followed by MISHA, 8.*

DVORNIK. Where shall I put all this *litracher*, barin? It's about broken my back?

VOLODYA. Well, where were you told to put it?

DVORNIK. Vasili Timofeyevitch said: Carry it into the study-room and he himself would soon be there.

VOLODYA. All right then dump it in that corner. (*Goes on with his reading. The DVORNIK puts down the bundle, sighs.*)

SONYA. What is it?

VOLODYA. "Pravda"—a newspaper.

MISHA. Doesn't Pravda mean Truth?

SONYA. What a lot of them!

VOLODYA. Yes, a whole year's. (*Returns to his reading.*)

MISHA. All that—written!

DVORNIK. Well, I'd say them as writ it didn't have no soft snap!

VOLODYA (*Laughs*). How did you say that?

DVORNIK. Yes, just so: I says, says I, they worked, not shirked.⁷ Well, I'm going now, tell him I brought 'em. (*Exit.*)

SONYA (*To VOLODYA.*) Why does papa want all those papers?

VOLODYA. He's going to cut out Bolshakof's articles.

SONYA. But Uncle Mikhail Ivanovitch says what Bolshakof writes makes him sick.

VOLODYA. Well, that's Dyadenka Mikhail Ivanovitch. He reads only "Verity for All."

⁷ *Pisali, nye gulyali.*

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MISHA. Is Uncle's "Verity" just as much as this Truth?

SONYA. Much more of it! You see one has been running a year and the other twenty years or more.

MISHA. Twenty times as much then?

SONYA (*Wishes to impress MISHA*). What's that amount to? These are only two newspapers but there are thirty or more others.

VOLODYA (*Not lifting his head*). Thirty! There are five-hundred and thirty in Russia, but if you reckon those published abroad, there are thousands of them in all.

MISHA. They'd fill up this room?

VOLODYA. This room! They'd fill up the whole street! Now please don't bother me. You know I've got an exam. to-morrow and here you are with your nonsense! (*Takes up his reading again.*)

MISHA. Well, it seems to me it's a waste of time to write so much.

SONYA. Why a waste of time?

MISHA. It's a waste of time because if it's true then why should they always be saying one and the same thing but if it is not true then there's no sense in lying.

SONYA. What an argument!

MISHA. But why do they write such a terrible lot?

VOLODYA (*Still at his book*). This is why: without the freedom of the press how should we know where the truth is?

MISHA. Now here's papa says that truth is in "Pravda" but Uncle Mikhail Ivanovitch that "Pravda" makes him sick. How can one know where truth is—in "Pravda" or in "Istina"—both being "truth"?

SONYA. Right you are! I think there are too many magazines, newspapers and books.

VOLODYA. How just like a woman—always hare-brained!

SONYA. No, I say that because there are so many, one can't tell.

VOLODYA. Reason is given to everyone just for this to decide where the truth is.

MISHA. Well, if everyone has intellect then everyone can decide for himself.

VOLODYA. So then your mighty intellect has already decided the question. But please go somewhere else and don't bother me any more.

XIV

REMORSE

VOLYA, 8, *stands in the corridor with an empty plate and is weeping.* FEDYA, 10, *runs in and stops short.*

FEDYA. Mama wants to know where you are. But what are you crying for? Did you carry it to the nurse? (*Sees the empty plate; whistles*) Where is the turn-over?

VOLYA. I . . . I . . . I w-wanted it, I . . . and suddenly oo-oo-oo—I accident'ly ate it up.

FEDYA. Didn't take it to nurse—ate it up? Well, that was a pretty trick! And mama thought you'd be glad to carry it to nurse!

VOLYA. Yes and I was glad to . . . but suddenly . . . accident'ly . . . oo-oo-oo!

FEDYA. You just tasted it and then you ate it all up! That's good! (*Laughs.*)

VOLYA. Yes . . . it's . . . it's . . . nice . . . for you . . . to laugh; but how shall I tell about it? . . . I can't tell nurse and I . . . can't tell mama . . .

FEDYA. Well, brother, you've gone and done it—ha-ha-ha! And so you ate it all up? Now what's the use of crying? You've got to plan.

VOLYA. What plan can I make? What can I do now?

FEDYA. Well, it's no great matter. (*Tries not to laugh.*)

(*Silence*)

VOLYA. What am I to do now? I'm in for it. (*Sobs.*)

FEDYA. What's the use of taking on so? Stop your sobbing! Just go and tell mama that you took it.

VOLYA. That would be still worse.

FEDYA. Well then go and tell nurse.

VOLYA. How can I tell her?

FEDYA. Listen then: you stay here, I'll run up to nurse and tell her. She won't mind.

VOLYA. No, don't say a word to her. How can I tell her?

FEDYA. What nonsense! Well, you made a blunder. I'll just go and tell her. (*Runs off.*)

VOLYA. Fedya! Fedya! Hold on! . . . He's gone! . . . I only just took one little taste and then I don't remember how, but I ate it up! What can I do now? (*Sobs.*)

FEDYA (*Comes running back*). Stop your sobbing! Just as I told you, nurse forgives you. All she said was, Oh the poor darling.⁸

VOLYA. Tell me, isn't she angry?

FEDYA. She didn't dream of being. "No matter about the turnover I'd have given it to him any way."

VOLYA. You see it was an accident. (*Begins to cry again.*)

FEDYA. What are you crying for now? We won't tell mama and nurse has forgiven you!

VOLYA. Nurse has forgiven me. I know she is good and kind. But I . . . I am mean, mean, mean. That's what makes me cry.

XV

ON ART

LACKEY, EKONOMKA (*Housekeeper*) and NATASHA, 8

LACKEY (*with a tray*). Some almond-emulsion and rum!

EKONOMKA (*Is knitting a stocking and counting the stitches*). Twenty-two, twenty-three . . .

LACKEY. Say, Avdotya Vasilyevna, did you hear me? Avdotya Vasilyevna!

⁸ *Akh, moi golubchik!*

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EKONOMKA. I hear you, I hear—in a minute! Don't interrupt me. (*To NATASHA*) In a minute, dearie, and I'll give you the plum-preserve. Have a bit of patience! I'll get the milk (*Pours out the milk*).

LACKEY (*Taking a seat*). Well I went to the show! And why in the world do they spend so much money?

EKONOMKA. You mean, you were at the theater? You got home pretty late, didn't you?

LACKEY. The Opera is always late. You wait and wait. Thank you, they let me in to look. 'Twas a marvel!

(*The BUTLER PAVEL enters with the cream and stops to listen*)

EKONOMKA. Singing, you mean?

LACKEY. Singing, I should smile! They squall like mad! No sense in it at all. "I love her very dearly," says he. And all that at the top of his voice and no sense in it at all. And then they squabble and have a fight and then they sing again.

EKONOMKA. But I've heard say the su'scription⁹ comes very dear.

LACKEY. Three-hundred rubles for our box for twelve pufformances.

PAVEL (*Shakes his head*). Three-hundred rubles! Who gets all that money?

LACKEY. Who gets it, why of course they give it to the ones as sing. They say one woman-singer receives fifty-thousand a year.

PAVEL. Not to speak of thousands, why three-hundred rubles here in the country okh, it's a heap of money. One may work all his life long and never see three-hundred rubles or even a hundred!

(*NINA, a High School girl of the Sixth Class enters the storeroom*)

NINA. Is Natasha here? What's become of you? Mama is inquiring for you.

⁹ *Abanent*, for *abonnement*.

NATASHA (*Gobbles her plum-preserve*). I'm coming.

NINA (*to the Butler*). What's that you were saying about a hundred rubles?

EKONOMKA. Semyon Nikolayevitch (*Indicates the LACKEY*) was saying as how he heard 'em singing at the theater last night and that they pay the singers such big money and Pavel here was s'prized. Is it a fact, Nina Mikhailovna that any singer gets fifty-thousand?

NINA. Even more. One singer was invited to America and they gave her a hundred and fifty thousand. And that's not the only case. In last evening's paper it said that a musician received twenty-five thousand rubles for one of his finger-nails.

PAVEL. All sorts of things are printed. It can't be possible.

NINA (*With evident satisfaction*). I'm telling you the honest truth.

PAVEL. But why twenty-five thousand for a finger-nail?

NATASHA. But why?

NINA. Because he plays the piano and was insured. So that if anything happens to his hand and he can't play, then he is paid damages.

PAVEL. Now, you don't say!

(*Enter SENETCHKA, of the Sixth Class in the Gymnasium*)

SENETCHKA. What kind of a meeting are you having here? What's it all about? (*NINA explains.*)

SENETCHKA. (*With even greater pride*). That about the finger-nail is nothing at all. In Paris a ballerina insured her leg for two-hundred thousand rubles—that was in case she should sprain herself and be unable to work.

LACKEY. That's the kind of folks that work without drawers on their legs, if I may be permitted to say so.

PAVEL. Well, that's work is it? Money should not be spent for such a thing.

SENETCHKA. Well, you see not everyone can do it and think how many years it takes to learn.

PAVEL. What for must they learn? Is there any good in twirling round on one's legs?

SENETCHKA. Well, you don't understand. Art is a great thing.

PAVEL. But I think it's sheer nonsense wasting money on such fool business. If money were got the way we get it—by back-breaking work, there wouldn't be none of them dancers and singers. All them isn't worth a grosh! Now why . . .

SENETCHKA. That's pure ignorance. For him Beethoven and Viardot and Rafael are all rubbish!

NATASHA. Well, I think he's right.

NINA. Come on, come on!

XVI

ON SCIENCE

Two Gymnazists; a REALIST, 15, and a CLASSICIST, 16, and two Twin Brothers of the CLASSICIST: VOLODYA and PETRUSHA, 8

REALIST. Why should I take Latin and Greek, when everything that is good and important has been already translated into modern languages?

CLASSICIST. You will never thoroughly enjoy the Iliad if you don't read it in Greek.

REALIST. But I don't need to read it at all and besides I don't care to.

VOLODYA. What is the Iliad?

REALIST. A story.¹⁰

CLASSICIST. True, but there's no other like it in the world.

PETRUSHA. What makes it so good?

REALIST. Oh, nothing; it's a story, a mere story.

CLASSICIST. Yes, only you'll never get an intelligent comprehension of antiquity, if you don't know these stories.

¹⁰ *Skazka*, a folk-tale.

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REALIST. But in my judgment it is just such a superstition as what is called Religion.

CLASSICIST (*Becoming heated*). Religion is lies and absurdities but this is history and wisdom.

VOLODYA. Do you mean Religion is rubbish?

CLASSICIST. What are you snooping around here for? Now, this is all beyond your comprehension.

BOTH TWINS (*Indignantly*). Why is it beyond our comprehension?

VOLODYA. May be our comprehension is better than yours.

CLASSICIST. All right, only don't interrupt our conversation and sit still. (*To the Realist*) You say the ancient languages have no relation to life. But you can say the same thing about bacteriology and chemistry and physics and astronomy. What good does it do you to know the distances of the stars and their dimensions and all these details which are utterly useless to anyone?

REALIST. Why useless? They are very useful.

CLASSICIST. What for?

REALIST. What for? For all sorts of things, for navigation say.

CLASSICIST. That doesn't require astronomy.

REALIST. But how about practical applications to agriculture, to medicine, to industry . . .

CLASSICIST. Well these same items are applicable also to bombs and to wars and are used by revolutionists. If this kind of knowledge had the effect of making people live better . . .

REALIST. But are people made better by your science?

VOLODYA. What kind of science does make people better?

CLASSICIST. I told you not to interrupt the conversation of your elders. You are always saying nonsensical things.

VOLODYA. } (*Simultaneously*). Nonsense or no nonsense, but just what sciences will make people better?

SCIENTIST. There are none such. Every person must work this out for himself.

CLASSICIST. Now, why do you bandy words with them? They don't understand at all.

REALIST. No? and why not? These things, Volodya, Petrusha, are not taught in the Gymnasia.

VOLODYA. Well if these things are not taught, then it is not necessary to study them.

PETRUSHA. When we grow up we are not going to learn what is not necessary.

VOLODYA. But we will learn how to live better.

CLASSICIST (*Laughs*). Here we have real sages! They have used their brains.

XVII

ON CIVIL LAW-COURTS

PEASANT; *his* WIFE *and a* Godmother (KUMA); FYÓDOR, *a Son*, 19; PYETKA, *another Son*, 9

PEASANT (*Enters the izbá, takes off his coat*). Well, it's some weather, hard getting here.

WIFE. 'Tis a crazy world! It must be fifteen versts, I reckon, ain't it?

PEASANT. All of twenty (*To his son Fyodor*). Go and put up the horse.

WIFE. Now tell us, was the case decided in our favor?

PEASANT. The devil was in the decision! There was no sense in it.

KUMA. What is the case, kumanók, I don't understand it.

PEASANT. This was the way of it: Averyan grabbed my garden, and claims it's his and I am at my wits' ends.

WIFE. We've been to law about it for two years.

KUMA. I know. How was it at the deestriect Court¹¹ last Lent didn't I hear 't was decided in your favor.

PEASANT. That's a fact, but Averyan appealed it to the Zemstvo Court and the Zemsky took it and sent the

¹¹ Volosti. The Volost is a district embracing several villages.

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whole case back for retrial. I went before the judges and they decided it in my favor. That ought to have settled it but it didn't. They reconsidered it and gave it to him. What judges them was!

WIFE. Well, what's to be done now?

PEASANT. Well, it's certain I'm not going to give him my property; I'll take it to a higher Court. I've already talked with an ablocate about it.

KUMA. But s'pose the higher Court lets him keep it?

PEASANT. I'll take it to one still higher. Even though I have to sell my last cow, we won't give it over to that fat-bellied devil.

KUMA. Okh, tribbl'ation, tribbl'ation—these courts! But now s'pose they decide in his favor?

PEASANT. I'll take it to the Tsar. I must go and give the horse some hay. *(Exit.)*

PYETKA. But if the Tsar should decide against us, then who can he take it to?

MOTHER. Beyond the Tsar there ain't nobody.

PYETKA. How do they decide it some for Aveyran and some for daddy?

MOTHER. It must be 'cause they themselves don't know?

PYETKA. Then why ask them if they don't know?

MOTHER. Well, it's because nobody wants to give up what's his own.

PYETKA. Now when I grow up this is what I'll do: if I quarrel with anyone about anything, we'll draw lots about it. Whoever wins gets it—and that's the end of it. Akulka and I always do that way.

KUMA. Now what do you say to that, please? Could anything be more reasonable? 'Twould be a saving.

WIFE. That's so. Think how it eats up money! The garden isn't worth it. Oi, it's a sin, a sin!

XVIII

ON CRIMINAL LAW

Children: GRISHKA, 12; SYEMKA, 10; TISHKA, 13

TISHKA. It's a lesson not to sneak into another person's corn-bin.

SYEMKA. That's so, if he did it, but you see Grandpa Mikita told me Mitrofan was innocent and yet they put him in jail.

TISHKA. What do you mean innocent? Then won't anything be done to the man who sentenced him?

GRISHKA. Sure, they won't pat him on the head for it, if he went against the law. They can punish him too.

SYEMKA. But who will punish him?

TISHKA. Why, the one that's higher up?

SYEMKA. But who's higher up?

TISHKA. The authorities.

SYEMKA. But s'posing the authorities make a mistake?

GRISHKA. There's someone still higher. They can be punished.

SYEMKA. That's what the Tsar's for. But s'posing the Tsar makes a mistake, then who'll punish him?

TISHKA. Who'll punish him, who'll punish him? Of course . . .

GRISHKA. God will punish him.

SYEMKA. Then God will punish the man who stole the cow. So let God and God only punish all who are guilty. For God won't make any mistake.

TISHKA. You see, that can't be.

SYEMKA. Why not?

TISHKA. Because . . .

XIX

ON PROPERTY

An old CARPENTER is mending the balustrade of a balcony. The seven-year-old son of the owner (BARCHUK) is watching him and admiring the CARPENTER'S work.

BARCHUK. What nice work you're doing? What's your name?

CARPENTER. What's my name? They used to call me Khrolka, now I'm Khrol but my last name is Savitch.

BARCHUK. What nice work you're doing, Khrol Savitch!

CARPENTER. It's the right thing to do good work. Why do bad work?

BARCHUK. Have you got a balcony?

CARPENTER (*Smiles*). Have I? Why, laddie, we've got a balcony which puts this one of yours into the shade! Our balcony has no windows and when you go into it, you go outdoors. That's the kind of a balcony we have.

BARCHUK. You are joking. No, really. Have you a balcony like this? I'm in earnest.

CARPENTER. Ekh! laddy darling . . . A balcony? What kind of a balcony can folks like we have? Folks like we are lucky to have a roof over their heads. The idea of a balcony! Ever since last Spring I've been trying to put on a new roof. I had to pull down the old one but the new one ain't done yet. And so far we're without a roof and the weather gets in.

BARCHUK. (*Surprised*). Why?

CARPENTER. Well, this is why: I hain't the means.

BARCHUK. Yes, but how is it you haven't the means? You are working for us, aren't you?

CARPEKTER. Yes, I'm working for you, but I can't for myself.

BARCHUK. Why not? I don't understand; explain it to me.

CARPENTER. When you grow up, buddie, you'll understand. I can work for you but not for myself.

BARCHUK. Why not?

CARPENTER. Because lumber is needed and I hain't got none—it has to be bought and I hain't nothing to buy it with. That's why I'm working for you; your Mamasha will pay me. You tell her to pay me a bit more and then I'll go to the woods and get half a dozen poplars for the rafters and so finish the roof.

BARCHUK. But haven't you any woods of your own?

CARPENTER. We have such big woods that if you walk in them three days you wouldn't come to the end of them. The only trouble is—they ain't mine!

BARCHUK. But Mamasha says that our woods cause her more annoyance than anything else! she gets nothing but worry from our woods.

CARPENTER. That's where the calamity comes in! Your Mamasha is bothered because she has so much forest and I am bothered because I haven't any. Now here I am wasting time talking with you and forgetting my work and we folks don't get praise for that. (*Resumes his work.*)

BARCHUK. When I grow up I'll make it so you and I'll have the same—everyone'll have equal shares.

CARPENTER. Make haste and grow up then, or else I shan't see the day. Only look out and don't forget. And what did I do with that plane?

XX

ON CHILDREN

LADY (BARUINYA); *her Children: Gymnasium Boy (MALCHIK), and TANETCHKA, 5, are walking in the Garden. To them enters an Old Peasant Woman (STARÚKHA).*

BARUINYA. What is it, Matryona?

STARUKHA. A favor of you.

BARUINYA. Well, what kind of a favor?

STARUKHA. Why, Lady, it's a shameful thing to say,

but what can you do. My daughter has got another baby.¹² She sent me to ask if you would stand for her in the Orthodox Faith.

BARUINYA. Yes, but didn't she have a baby a short time ago?

STARUKHA. Indeed she did! It was last year, at Lent.

BARUINYA. How many grandchildren are there in your house now?

STARUKHA. Oh, Matushka, you couldn't count 'em; I'd give the half of 'em away! And each one smaller than the other. It's a shame!

BARUINYA. How many has your daughter now?

STARUKHA. Seven, dear Lady, and all alive. If God would just take away some of them!

BARUINYA. What's that? How can you say such a thing?

STARUKHA. But what is one to do? And one sins, being cursed. Yes, and we're so needy! Say, have pity on us, Matushka, give us the christening! For if you don't, God is my witness, we have nothing to pay the priest with and not even enough bread. They're all little ones. My son-in-law's out at service and me and my daughter are alone. I'm an old woman and she's always pregnant or with a new baby. How much work can she do? I have to do it all alone. And that pack is always hollerin' for something to eat.

BARUINYA. Are there really seven of them?

STARUKHA. As true as I'm living—seven. The oldest little girl is only just beginning to help, but all the rest are too small.

BARUINYA. But why in the world do you have so many?

STARUKHA. How can you help it, Lady? He comes for a visit or on a holiday. It's natural with young folks. And he lives near by, in the city. If only he were to go somewhere far off!

BARUINYA. Yes, one woman mourns because she has

¹² Matryona calls her daughter (or perhaps daughter-in-law) *vasha kumash-ka-to*, your stupid little *kuma*. *Kuma* is the name a mother and a god-mother call each other by; here it means god-daughter. Matryona calls the Lady *mátushka-báruinya*.

no children and because they are dead but you mourn because you have too many.

STARUKHA. So many, so many! Beyond our strength. Well, Lady, may she hope?

BARUINYA. Very good. I've had the others christened and I'll take this one too. A boy?

STARUKHA. A little boy but healthy and he has a pair of lungs . . . When will you set the time?

BARUINYA. Whenever you wish?

(The Old Woman expresses her thanks and exit.)

TANETCHKA. Mama, why is it some have children and not others? You have and Matryona has but Parasha hasn't.

BARUINYA. Parasha isn't married. Children are born when folks are married. They get married, become husband and wife, then the children are born.

TANETCHKA. Do they always have them?

BARUINYA. No, not always. Our cook has a wife but they have no children.

TANETCHKA. But can't it be so managed that anyone who wanted children should have them born but anyone who didn't shouldn't have any?

MALCHIK. What stupid things you ask?

TANETCHKA. Not stupid at all! I think that if Matryona's daughter shouldn't want children, it could be arranged that so there wouldn't be any. Mama, can't that be done?

MALCHIK. Now, I tell you, you are talking nonsense: it's something you don't know about.

TANETCHKA. Mama, can it be done so?

BARUINYA. How can I tell you? We don't know about it. It comes from God.

TANETCHKA. But how are children born?

MALCHIK. From a goat. *(Laughs.)*

TANETCHKA *(Offended)*. There's nothing to laugh at. I think that if as Matryona says, children make it hard for them, it ought to be arranged so they wouldn't have any. Here's nurse—she hasn't any and never had.

BARUINYA. You see, she's unmarried, she has no husband.

TANETCHKA. Then everyone who doesn't love children ought to be like that. Just think! Children are born and there's no food for them! (*Mother and son exchange glances and are silent.*) When I grow up I shall certainly get married and I am going to arrange to have a girl and a boy but no more than that. For how can it be right to have children and not love them? How I will love my own! Isn't it true, Mama? Now I'm going to see nurse and ask her. (*Exit.*)

BARUINYA (*To her son*). Yes, as the saying goes, Out of the mouth of babes—how does it go?—comes Truth. What she says is absolute truth. If people realized that marriage is a serious matter and not for mere pleasure, that they ought to marry not for their own selves but for their children there would not be such terrible things—foundlings and outcasts—nor would children be as in the case of Matryona's daughter not a joy but a misfortune.

XXI

ON EDUCATION

DVORNIK is *polishing the door-knobs*; KATYA, 7, is *constructing little houses out of blocks*; NIKOLAI, a Schoolboy, 15, enters, *flings down his book*.

NIKOLAI. The Devil take 'em and that thrice-cursed Gymnasium!

DVORNIK. Now what's the matter?

NIKOLAI. Flunked again.¹³ There'll be a rumpus again. Great use for me is this cursed geography! Where are C'lifornias? Why the Devil must I know about them?

DVORNIK. What'll they do to you?

NIKOLAI. Make me take it over again.

DVORNIK. But why don't you study?

¹³ Literally: "They've driven in another pole (*palka*)—that is a figure 1, the lowest mark.

NIKOLAI. Why? Because I can't learn rubbish. Ekh! Hang it all! (*Throws himself into a chair.*) I'll go and tell mamasha, "I can't do it and that's the end of it." Let 'em do what they please but I can't do it. And if they don't take me out of school, I'll run away. By God, I'll run away!

DVORNIK. Where would you go to?

NIKOLAI. I'll run away from home. I'll hire out as a coachman, or a dvornik—anything would be better than this devilish nonsense!

DVORNIK. But you see dvorniks have to do hard work. Get up early, chop wood, carry sticks, build fires.

NIKOLAI. Whew! (*Whistles*). That's a holiday! Chopping wood—I like to do that! Great you surprised me! But I tell you, I like to do that. No, you just try to learn geography!

DVORNIK. That's all right. But why do they make you?

NIKOLAI. That's the question, Why? Why? There's no why about it. It's the custom. They think you can't get along without it.

DVORNIK. Well, it's so you can go into the Service later, get rank and a salary, just like your papasha or your uncle.

NIKOLAI. But supposing I don't want to?

KATYA. Yes, supposing he doesn't want to?

(*Enter MOTHER with a letter in her hand.*)

MOTHER. Here's the Director writes that you've got a one again. This can't go on, Nikolenka! One of two things: either you study or you don't study.

NIKOLAI. Of course, it's one of two things: I can't, I can't and I can't. Let me off, for God's sake! I simply can't learn!

MOTHER. Why can't you?

NIKOLAI. It's just so; I can't; I can't get it into my head.

MOTHER. You don't get it into your head because you don't think about it. Stop thinking of silly things and think about what you are taught.

NIKOLAI. Mamenka, I am telling you in all earnest.

Let me off! I don't need anything, only let me get rid of this horrible studying, this drudgery! I can't stand it!

MOTHER. But what will you do?

NIKOLAI. That is my affair.

MOTHER. Not at all, it's not your affair but mine. I am responsible before God for you; it is my duty to educate you.

NIKOLAI. But supposing I can't?

MOTHER (*Sternly*). What nonsense—"I can't!" I am talking with you for the last time as your Mother: I beg of you to turn over a new leaf and do what you are told. If you don't listen to me now, I shall be compelled to take measures.

NIKOLAI. I have told you that I can't and I won't!

MOTHER. Nikolai, look out.

NIKOLAI. "Look out" nothing! Why do you torment me? You don't understand this.

MOTHER. Don't you speak that way! How do you dare to do so? Leave the room! Beware!

NIKOLAI. And I'll go! I'm not afraid of anything. I don't need a single thing from you. (*Runs out, slamming the door.*)

MOTHER (*Soliloquizing*). Akh! He is such a trial! But I know well what is the cause of the whole trouble. It's because he does not put his mind on the needful things but is thinking all the time about trifles—his dogs and hens.

KATYA. But Mama, don't you remember how you yourself told me how impossible it was not to think about the Polar bear?

MOTHER. I am not talking about that but about the necessity for him to study when he is told.

KATYA. Yes, but he says he can't.

MOTHER. He talks nonsense.

KATYA. But you see he doesn't say that he wants to do nothing; he only doesn't want to study geography. He is willing to work; he'd like to be a coachman or a dvornik.

MOTHER. If he were the son of a dvornik he might be a dvornik, but he is the son of his father, so he must study.

KATYA. But he doesn't want to study.

MOTHER. It makes no difference whether he wants to or doesn't want to, he must obey.

KATYA. But supposing he can't?

MOTHER. Be careful. Don't you follow his example!

KATYA. But that's exactly what I want to do. Nothing shall ever make me study what I don't want to.

MOTHER. And you will be a fool.

KATYA. When I grow up and have children of my own I shall never compel them to study. If they want to study, let them, but if they don't, why, it won't be necessary.

MOTHER. You will grow up and you'll do nothing of the kind.

KATYA. I certainly shall.

MOTHER. You won't when you grow up.

KATYA. Yes, I shall, I shall, I shall!

MOTHER. Well, then you'll be a fool.

KATYA. Nurse says God needs fools!¹⁴

(1909)

¹⁴ *Durakí i dúrui.*

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